THE

MODERN CHURCHMAN

By identifying the new learning with heresy, you make orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance.—*Erasmus.*

A State without the means of change is without the means of its conservation.—*Edmund Burke.*

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THE CHURCH LOOKS FORWARD

By The Editor.

THE Annual Conferences of Modern Churchmen began in the year of the Great War. The first was held in the little cathedral city of Ripon in July in the wonderful summer of 1914, and the successive Conferences have been held annually without intermission until the present year. Our twenty-sixth Annual Conference held at Girton College, Cambridge, in 1939, terminated twenty-four hours before its appointed close owing to the German invasion of Poland on September 1. Our twenty-seventh Annual Conference was arranged to take place at Somerville College, Oxford, September 9—14, 1940, but the vicissitudes of our second Great War precluded the Conference being held. Although the Conference was never held, it seems worth while to put on record its programme of papers and contributors. 'The Church looks forward' was its theme, and the Presidential address, entitled 'The Present State of Christianity,' was to have been delivered by Sir Cyril Norwood. The programme of Conference papers was as follows:—

Christian Values and Modern Civilization (Sir Alfred Zimmern).
Essential Christianity in Faith (Rev. Chancellor J. S. Bezzant).
Essential Christianity in Practice (Rev. Canon Harold Anson).
The other Great Historic Religions (Dr. A. C. Bouquet).
Bolshevism and Nazism (Rev. H. P. Kingdon, M.A.).
Humanism (Prof. Gilbert Murray, F.B.A.).
Indifferentism and Pessimism (Rev. J. C. Hardwick, M.A., B.Sc.).
Christian Obscurantism and Sectarianism (Rev. G. L. H. Harvey, M.A.).
The Bible in the Light of Modern Research (Rev. L. B. Cross, M.A.).
The National Church as it is and as it might be (Dr. Major).
Public Worship and Sunday Observance (Rev. F. E. Compton, B.A., B.Sc.).
The Christian Tradition in English Education (Guy Kendall, Esq., M.A.).
The Christian Spirit in English Public Life (Sir Arnold Wilson, K.C.I.E., M.P.).

As however the war advanced, many of our promised contributors wrote regretting that national service of the most urgent kind must prevent, not only their attendance, but even the preparation of the papers they had

consented to deliver. Sir Arnold Wilson, to whose paper, 'The Christian Spirit in English Public Life,' we had eagerly looked forward, had fallen meanwhile as an air-gunner in the great battle of Dunkirk. The way in which scholarly clergy were swept from their studies into the maelstrom of war duties is illustrated by the following letter (published without his permission) from one who had promised to contribute a Conference paper but found himself unable to keep his promise:

'It is with very sincere regret that I have to ask you whether you can release me from my promise to contribute a paper to the Conference Number of the *Modern Churchman*.

I think that the best way to explain why I am driven to do this is to tell you the conditions under which I am working. I am an Air Raid Warden, Officiating Chaplain to a Balloon Centre, and Chaplain to the local Home Guard. Last night the siren sounded at 9.45. I then went the round of the air raid shelters in the centre of the town, and had a chat with the inmates of each. After reporting to the A.R.P. post that all was correct, I visited the various Home Guard posts. Some of these consist of old men, and some of mere lads. At one post a boy under seventeen years of age was on duty by himself. Bombs were dropping not far away, and there was a certain amount of shrapnel from A.A. guns flying about. The lad was smiling and plucky, but—which was not surprising—his face was pretty white. Under the circumstances, as an older man, I had no choice but to stay with him till the worst was over. The bombers come over every half-hour or so . . . and when they reach us they have a go for the searchlights. . . So far they have done us only little material damage. Then I heard that three big houses in different parts of the parish were hit. I was not able to get to either of these, but, when I heard that they were bringing a body from one of them to the mortuary, I arranged to be picked up by the ambulance in which the body was, and went with the men into the mortuary to say a prayer and to ensure that everything was done decently and reverently. I am sure that this kind of thing is well worth while. The police expressed their appreciation of what I had done, and I am sure that they meant it. All this does not sound very much: but it was an all-night raid, I covered a great deal of ground, and I did not get home till 4.45 a.m. By the time I had had a cup of tea and was able to go to bed it was 5.30. Incidentally, I was just dozing off when a big time bomb with delayed action exploded near the Rectory. We are having raids like this every night. The delayed action bomb is a regular feature with us nowadays. On Saturday night our Church Hall . . . was pretty badly knocked about by a bomb, and yesterday a delayed action bomb exploded at 11 a.m. within 300 yards of it, bursting a water main. These time bombs are nasty things. Yesterday, in a neighbouring parish, some soldiers were killed by one of them when it exploded while they were trying to remove it. They do not touch them unless they are lying in a congested area. I have now had my breakfast, and I must go out and ask the police whether the inhabitants of the houses which were hit are still there, and, if they are, call on them. Then there are some people who have been warned to keep to the rear rooms of their houses, as unexploded time bombs are lying dangerously close to their front doors. I ought to go and see them. Nor have I had time to inspect the damage done to the Church Hall. I must do this to-day. As, I suppose, there will be another raid to-night, it is essential that I get an hour or two of sleep before the evening.

The night I have described is typical of my nights for the past

fortnight, with a respite of two nights only, and there is no reason to expect any change so long as the present fine bombing weather continues. I have naturally had my *Modern Churchman* paper in mind for some time: but I have not yet started it as there is some reading I want to do at the Reference Library in connection with it. There is no chance, as things are, of finding the time to get there.'

This number of the *Modern Churchman,* smaller indeed than our usual Conference Number, contains six of the papers which would have been read at our Oxford Conference, had it taken place. To these we have added other contributions, not, we hope, less timely.

We trust that what has befallen is merely a break in our Conference succession, and not a termination. Should it prove, however, to be the latter, it would not be inappropriate that a series of conferences, initiated on the eve of one great war, should terminate amid the toil and turmoil of another.

We have, however, no intention of seeming to conclude on a pessimistic note. Whatever its result, the task has been worth attempting, for it was inspired by a sense of duty rather than by any optimistic expectations of sudden and easily achieved success. We are glad that the title of the Conference we have not been able to hold should have been 'The Church Looks Forward.' We hope indeed that the Church is looking forward, but we are by no means convinced that this is the case. Of this however we are convinced, that the only hope of advancing and deepening Christian influence in the world to-day depends upon the Church possessing and developing the forward outlook and in allowing that outlook to inspire its policy and action. Jean Jacques Rousseau, in his epoch-making treatise, which inaugurated the great era of the French Revolution with its ideals of human brotherhood, equality and freedom from which so many nations are averting their eyes to-day, opens with the declaration: 'Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains.'

This affirmation is more true of the Christian Church than of the human race. Jesus Christ was pre-eminently the supreme religious Liberator of mankind, but His religion has been used to subserve the interests of every kind of tyranny. St. Paul, in seeking to liberate Christianity from the chains of Jewish legalism, declared: 'With freedom did Christ set us free' . . . 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.' All efforts to unite the Christian Church to-day are thwarted by ecclesiastical tradition which claims absolute authority based on ancient precedents: all attempts to secure the re-statement of Christian truth to-day, so as to enable it to win the loyalty of modern men and women, are restricted and cramped by insisting on the absolute authority of archaic, dogmatic formularies. Not all such precedents are wrong and therefore to be rejected; far from it: not all such dogmatic formulations are false and therefore to be denied; far from it: but the ideal and practice of determining Church teaching and policy by appeals to such authorities, and not by appeals to the demands of the Spirit of Truth, Love and Freedom which are unveiled to us pre-eminently in the religion of Jesus Christ, is what is standing between the Christian Church and her rightful and needful influence on human life to-day. It is the sub-Christian spirit of slavery to tradition, culminating in the un-Christian spirit of tyranny over the Christian mind and conscience, which is the cause of the Church's failure, on the one hand to unite itself, and on the other to win the secular world. Of course doctrines, formularies, institutions, practices and policies have their needful place in the Christian religion, but that place is secondary, not primary. They are not the tests of the Spirit of Truth, Love and Freedom, but they are to be tested by that Spirit, and to be rejected or reformulated and reconstituted in accordance

with the demands of the Spirit of Truth, Love and Freedom. That is the real point at issue to-day between the contending parties seeking the reunion of Christendom. The authorities of the Christian Church have got to face that issue, and by their decision the Christian Church will either stand or fall. Of course we must have continuity in the Christian religion; of course we must have order in the Christian life; but this continuity and order must not be established by the authority of appeals to ancient precedents but by demonstrating their essential value for the present needs of the Christian life in its contemporary environment. If this principle — the essentially Christian principle — were accepted as our sole authority, we could secure Christian reunion, which, after years and years of ecclesiastical discussions and negotiations, we have failed to secure. In 1920 we English Church folk throughout the world were nearer Christian unity than in 1940, and unless the present rising tide of ecclesiastical and dogmatic reaction should be reversed by the war, the hope of securing a single Christian fellowship for our English-speaking peoples becomes small indeed. Yet without such Christian fellowship and the fruitful co-operation which issues from it, the various Christian Churches in our midst must continue to decrease in vitality and influence until they are left, like little islands, in a vast secularist ocean which, if it is to be spiritualized, must yield to other forces and agencies than those of the so-called Christian Churches. The prophet Jeremiah cites a popular anthem chanted in the Temple of his day, expressive of the faith of contemporary Judaism in its own religious orthodoxy and permanence: '*The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these*' (*Jer.* vii, 4). The religious conviction expressed in this ancient version of 'The Church's one foundation' did not prevent the destruction of the Temple, the slaughter or deportation of its worshippers, and the replacement of its complacent *cultus* by a more moral and spiritual religion — the faith of the elect prophetic remnant.

Is not a similar fate overtaking our contemporary Christianity? Certainly no prophetic eye can see the Christian Churches of to-day achieving the salvation of mankind, or even securing safety for themselves, by striving to remain as they are or by seeking, with eyes turned backward, to reproduce the past. Although many of our ancient and beautiful churches and cathedrals may be laid in ruins by our barbarian invaders, yet if the Church of the English people shall have learnt by the experience of the war that the Christian religion is primarily and essentially the Spirit of Divine Truth, Love and Freedom, and that all else is secondary, our material losses, colossal as they may be, will have been well worth while; for once again in the history of our Christian Church the temporal will have yielded place to the eternal. Our British peoples, with invincible fortitude and fearlessness, are once again re-learning the supreme lesson of their nation's history and are inscribing it in letters of suffering and sacrifice for the inspiration of mankind.

> 'There is a heritage of heroic example and noble obligation, not reckoned in the Wealth of Nations, but essential to a nation's life: the contempt of which, in any people, may, not slowly, mean even its commercial fall.
>
> Very sweet are the uses of prosperity, the harvest of peace and progress, the fostering of sunshine of health and happiness, and length of days in the land. But there be things—oh, sons of what has deserved the name of Great Britain, forget it not!—"the good of" which and "the use of" which are beyond all calculation of worldly goods and earthly uses: things such as Love, and Honour, and the Soul of Man, which cannot be bought with a price, and which do not die with death.'*

* *Jackanapes*, by Juliana Horatio Ewing.

THE HEATHEN HERITAGE OF THE CHURCH

By the Rev. E. P. Boys-Smith, M.A.

THE Modern Churchmen's Union in the years since its formation has rendered great service to live Christianity, and in particular to the Church of England. It has stood for freedom and an open mind to receive the revelation of truth which God is ever making, and that in many ways, to successive ages. To our own times this revelation has come pre-eminently by the way of scientific, historical and critical research, all of which have brought a flood of new illumination alike on the facts of God's creation and on the old traditions bound up with the Christian religion. To close the eyes to this in timid unbelief that 'God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all' is a thing un-Christian. The Modern Churchmen's Union has steadily withstood this, challenging spiritual adventure, and affirming the right of those who shew it to a place in the Church of England. And this position has now been made good. The struggle for freedom in Scriptural criticism, in which Robertson Smith was a protagonist over sixty years ago, has been won, and though the obscurantists and fundamentalists continue, they no longer obstruct with any hope of success. And the recent Report on Doctrine in the Church of England has vindicated the place of independent thought and interpretation of traditional belief. This makes a call to new adventure by the Modern Churchmen's Union. It is not enough that it should rest upon its oars; still less that it should go on striking the water which has been traversed, without pressing on. The standing by God's help gained constitutes both an opportunity and a duty to win the way further into the realm of Christian truth. I feel misgiving (and know that I am not alone in feeling it) that in the most recent years Modern Churchmen are not showing enough courage and adventure, but are either repeating work which has now been done once for all, or are illustrating it by raising only minor issues instead of those greater ones which now need to be faced.

One such graver issue which ought, as it seems to me, to be seriously tackled I would here raise: it is the superstition with which the use of the sacraments is entangled in the Church. It is of old standing; and, what is worse, the Church has been

organized on the basis of such superstition for centuries. To avoid misapprehension let me say here that by 'the Church' I mean the whole community of Christian people. The Church of England will be primarily in my mind, but what I have to say holds good quite as much of other Christian bodies, and even more of the Church of Rome; we are all under the same condemnation. The superstition has roots running far back into the past, so an historic approach is necessary.

In the earliest days the Church received the two sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as symbolic acts of self-consecration to which it was enabled by the grace of God. It felt, like the apostle, that it 'could do all things through Christ enabling it,' but was always dependent on Him. Baptism was the act of initiatory consecration; in it the sins and stains of the past were symbolically washed away, and the disciple rose from the water into newness of life as his Lord had risen, and that with Him and through His inspiring power. So it was a washing 'into the Name,' *i.e.* into the grace and power of God, the Creator of life, and the Sustainer of the new life entered on. The Lord's Supper was the act of closer association and actual incorporation into the very life of Christ in His own supreme self-consecration. In the hour of its culmination He had said in prayer, as He went by the way of death in quest of life, 'For their sakes I consecrate myself that they too may themselves be consecrated in truth.'[1] And the embodiment of this hope and purpose was for the Church the participation in the Lord's own self-sacrifice, by symbolically eating and drinking His flesh and blood, as in most ancient sacrifices, notably the Passover, the worshippers participated by eating of the victim slain. And again it is the communion of the victorious life of the Lord which empowers for such consecration.

A consecrated life with Christ is an heroic life, possible for human frailty only through the grace of God; or, to express the same thing differently, when the disciple can say with some measure of truth, 'It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me.'[2] He had doubted whether this heroic life would not be above the reach of His followers, and so to two of the most ardent He had put the question, 'Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink? or to be baptized with the baptism that I am bap-

[1] *John* xvii, 19. ἁγιάζω = consecrate, not sanctify. ἀλήθεια = truth of fact, not truth of proposition or utterance; it stands for 'reality.'

[2] *Gal.* ii, 20.

tized with?'[3] But when they averred 'We are able,' He gave them the promise, 'The cup that I drink ye shall drink; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized.' And to the Church He gave the same promise, not in words, but in the two sacraments which are actions that His followers are called to do, not alone, but in communion with Him, 'the Lord working with them and confirming the word by the signs.'[4] 'Effectual signs,' the Prayer Book calls them. That is what symbols are, actions (or it may be things) that have a significance beyond what can be seen which gives them power; in this case actions in which the unseen Lord meets and co-operates with His servants who brace themselves to join in His own consecration to a life which is not of this world, but draws from the Divine life power to rise here and now into the 'new life hid with Christ in God.'

One result of this higher energy of life was that from the first Christians went forth and preached everywhere this gospel of life. But everywhere they found themselves in a heathen world, and trying to bring to minds moulded by heathen ideas and with ingrained heathen habits, hopes and ideals not easily grasped. Often the Christian aims were cramped and debased by the narrow and sordid minds of those to whom they were presented; for these could not readily shake off the trammels of past years of heathenism, or the encumbrance of still surrounding heathen society. So as the Church extended, it not only lifted the world to a higher level, but was itself dragged down nearer to the level of the world. Its proper heroic and unearthly aims tended to become accommodated to what the average mind, schooled in a society earthy and unheroic, found practicable. And this tension is always with us; it is inherent in the antithesis of the ideal and the actual, of faith and attainment, and is found even in the most spiritually-minded, who know that their treasure is held in earthen vessels.

For some time the double process was gradual, but the day came when the act of Constantine adopting Christianity as the religion of the Empire, together with the insistence of some of the 'barbarian' tribes on receiving baptism wholesale when their leaders did, though their life continued heathen as before, and with the constant forces of ignorance and crudeness, heathen influence came flooding into the Church on a much more serious scale. That happened on the eve of the 'Dark Ages,' when the

[3] *Mk.* x, 3. [4] *Mk.* xvi, 20.

old civilization was breaking up, and this both facilitated and confirmed the process. The latter half of the first millenium A.D. was a time of deep ignorance, disorder, and violence, during which the Church had a hard task to keep Christianity alive, much more to make it the leaven which should leaven the whole lump of European heathenism. All honour to those few who achieved so much for and with their Lord; but we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that during this dark time Christian ideas and ideals were very seriously depreciated, if not entirely submerged, in the Church itself, by the inertia, the intractability, and the gross superstition of so large a proportion of its membership. And it was this long period of darkness and debasement which formed the foundation on which the Middle Ages had to be built, and the Mediaeval Church organized down to the Reformation Age. Who can be surprised if there was then, and if there is now, a great deal of superstition and purblindness deeply embedded in the traditions of the Church, whether of teaching or practice?

Now in the ancient heathen world, and even still in the world outside Christian influence, two propensities were widespread, if not universal: the one to materialism, the other to a belief in magic. Both sadly obstructed and vitiated any spiritual perception or understanding. The sacraments, which were undefined and indefinable, as all symbols are, were especially exposed to these malign influences and suffered gravely. On the one hand materialism seized on what was material in them to give to this inordinate emphasis at the expense of what was spiritual and vital. So in Baptism the water was blessed to become 'holy water' and overshadowed the symbolic action of washing. In the other sacrament the bread and the wine were stressed, and the consecration was transferred from the persons to these materials. The action of participating in the Lord's holy will, which constituted His perfect sacrifice (by eating and drinking of the Lamb of God), was treated as subordinate, or even lost to sight and disregarded, though properly central. Then, on the other hand, magic was brought to bear. It made the external rite of baptism seem all-important. If for any cause this were absent, it was denied that the salvation of the unbaptized individual was possible, and age-long discussions of the question went on in the theological schools during the Middle Ages. In the case of the other sacrament the effect was yet more disastrous. The conception of magic made some transmutation in the materials of

bread and wine easily credible, while quite inexplicable; and it led to such gross abuses as carrying the consecrated wafer as an amulet to give protection in danger, and to adoration of the host, and presently to the doctrine of transubstantiation. All true appreciation of this sacrament of heroic consecration in personal communion with the Lord in His consecrated life was lost for most men in 'the miracle of the mass,' which was sheer magic performed by the priest. In the early Church there were no priests in the sense of *cohen*, *hiereus* or *sacerdos*; the ministers of the community were *presbyteroi*, *i.e.* elders, the natural leaders of the rest; and it was a disastrous divergence from the Christian standpoint when false analogy with heathen customs, or at best with the Judaic usage of the temple which had been superseded, transferred them into mass-priests.[5]

The most serious matter, however, was not the percolation of these heathen ideas and misconceptions which obscured, and even sapped, the Christian sacraments in the Middle Ages, but the appalling fact that the Church organized itself on the basis of these false views and habits. Had that been done deliberately it would have been sheer apostasy on the part of the Church. But done it was, though not with open eyes and heathen purpose. The organization of the Church was steadily built up and continually strengthened by using these gross misapprehensions concerning the sacraments and the priesthood, which had come in the Dark Ages to have so wide a currency, and to be so deeply embedded, that their un-Christian origin was neither remembered nor recognized. They were most efficient starting-points for the exploitation of power, which tempts every organization, the Church being no exception. But nothing corrupts like power sought and gained. Nor is anything so contrary to the aim which Christ made crucial of being the 'Servant of all.' This it is which has always been the greatest obstacle to reformation in those sections of the Church which have most persistently resisted reform. Again and again endeavours were made by earnest Christian minds to reform the abuses which all men saw were prevalent in the Mediaeval Church, paralyzing its influence for good and de-Christianizing both its theory and its practice, but one after another they failed, and were bound to fail, so long as the foundations of the Church's organization were built on heathen distortions of the sacraments and ministry. In the merci-

[5] The Christian standpoint is set forth emphatically in Christ's sayings, *Mt.* xxiii, 8-12; *John* ii, 19-21.

ful providence of God full and final disaster was averted by the survival of the original Christian message in the New Testament Scriptures, and the undying promise of the Lord to be with His servants 'all the days, even to the end of the world.' If He could foresee the course of events through the Dark and the Middle Ages, no wonder that even He asked Himself the question, 'When the Son of Man cometh shall he find faith on the earth?'[6]

In the Reformation Age more strenuous endeavours were made, and a good deal of sorely-needed purgation of abuses and clarification of Christian ideas and institutions was effected, though least in those parts of the Church where ecclesiastical power was most tenaciously held by the clergy. But the reformers were not always radical enough in their endeavours, nor sufficiently penetrating in their analysis of the needs. And certainly if they achieved a good deal they left very much undone. It is for our times which come after to tackle this. We have received immense help towards this through the historical, scriptural and scientific research which has been so notable a characteristic of the last century and a half, and to-day the Church ought to be ready to go forward. Within our own section of it in this land the Modern Churchmen's Union has stood for an open-minded vision of truth, and has played a manful part in such fields as Biblical study and the exercise of independent thought. But the ground that has been gained leaves it still confronted with the fundamental misrepresentation of the sacraments as centreing in sacred *things*, instead of being, as they are, symbolic *actions* in which help may be found to enter into and share the Lord's own self-consecration. As used in the Church they are entangled with a heathen heritage of materialism and magic; and it is often hard to distinguish, alike in the Church's teaching and practice of them, between Christian aspiration and degrading superstition. Any strenuous endeavour to elucidate and reform in this sacred field is sure to arouse strenuous resistance and resentment in many earnest souls, for whom long and hallowed association has made the tangle of Christian and heathen, spiritual and superstitious, true and false, seem a single and a sacred unity and heritage. But should that daunt those who by the grace of God can discern something of the higher purpose and possibility of the sacraments 'according to the mind of Christ'? The prophets and reformers have

[6] *Lk.* xviii, 8.

always met with resistance and denunciation. If the Modern Churchmen's Union is to fulfil its noblest duty the time has come, as it seems to me, to face this fundamental evil of sacramental superstition with its corruption of the Church's organization and life, and so to move on to further Christian adventure, however unwelcome to many, encouraged by the Lord's reminder, 'So persecuted they the prophets which were before you.'

Many are keenly aware that these days of tremendous crisis are calling Christians to new adventure, and that we shall refuse God's challenge if we are unwilling to move forward into paths untried and beset with toil and privation. How can the Church play its part if it will not renounce the *damnosa hereditas* from heathenism and superstition which underlies its organization? This weighs it down and distorts its perception of what it is called to do. For any real leadership two things are essential: freedom and a sense of proportion. Neither is at present possible while the Church clings to habits and standpoints which are sub-Christian and derived from times of darkness. At whatever cost, these ought to be cast away. Are we too deaf to hear the Lord's voice saying to the Church '*Ephatha*'?

His sacraments are the right starting-point, and in particular that of the Lord's Supper. The vital point is to recognize that here is both set forth in symbol, and realized in spiritual fact, the consecration of living persons who are brought by faith into a communion of life with their Lord and enabled to share in that heroic life to which He consecrated Himself and finally attained when lifted up upon the Cross to draw men unto Himself. The 'consecration' of the material elements employed in the symbolism is no more than setting these forward for this symbolic use. It is quite unessential, for it is not possible to consecrate lifeless things in the sense that living persons may be consecrated. 'There is nothing holy in the world,' said Kant, 'except a holy will.' This sacrament is a means of incorporation of believers into the holy will of Christ, 'in the which will we have been consecrated through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all' (*Heb.* x, 10). Let this be fully recognized, and at once there must fall away all those materialistic and half magical elements which have poisoned this Christian rite for centuries, and it stands out a symbolic action wholly spiritual in its nature and effect. Old-standing abuses cease to find support, and embittered controversies become irrelevant: *e.g.* 'reservation' is out of question, for it is impossible to 'reserve' an

action, and the reservation of a *thing* merely incidental to the action is unmeaning. With this go, of course, such practices as 'exposition,' 'adoration,' 'services of devotion,' and misconception of the 'real presence,' all of which are consequences of the displacement, originally under heathen influences, of the purpose of consecration from the persons in communion with the Lord to the things which are the accidents of the symbolism. What an incubus would be lifted from the Church if these debasing misunderstandings and disputes were abandoned, and it found itself free to face and fight the evil in the world which Jesus faced and fought to the death! What new possibility would be opened up for the unity of the Church, when this sacrament was found to be a real rallying centre as Jesus intended, instead of being the chief centre of controversy as it has been ever since its contamination by heathen ideas!

If freedom of movement is the first requirement for leadership by the Church in the critical times which lie before us, the second and no less necessary one is a sense of proportion. 'All life,' said Hort, 'is a question of proportion.' That is profoundly true, and most of all for the higher life. No characteristic of the Lord Jesus is more impressive than His perfect proportion; if Christianity is true to itself it must have the same characteristic. And without this the Church will neither be able to lead others, nor to see its own way clearly. But it cannot expect to gain the insight or impart the inspiration which a true sense of proportion brings while its own organization, and the power on which it relies, are founded on the distorting views inherited from the Dark and the Middle Ages, which are no part of the gospel of Life to which it is charged to bear witness. Our Lord said, 'If ye abide in my word ye are truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' To find our way through the baffling problems, and to overcome the many obstacles that lie before us in the coming years of destruction and reconstruction following, we must hold on to that promise, and trust it. The Church will fail if it does not; if it does, it must purge out the sub-Christian ideas which underlie its present practice and outlook. So only will it win its own emancipation, and be able to lead in the true way. For this energizing sense of proportion Hort's illuminating saying helps: 'The true ecclesiastical life, and the true Christian life, and the true human life, are all one and the same.'

CHRISTIANITY IN PRACTICE

By the Rev. Canon Anson, M.A., Master of the Temple.

THE chief difficulty which besets the ordinary man who is trying with sincerity, in the everyday circumstances of his life, to put Christianity into practice lies in the endeavour to relate absolute standards of conduct with those which are relative to the actual possibilities of the situation in which he finds himself placed. His difficulty is not merely owing to the fact that we all find it difficult to live up to the highest standard of conduct in any department of life, but to the much more obstinate and obvious fact that if he did live by the ultimate standards, which would fit an ideal state of society, he would be doing a positive wrong to the society in which his lot is cast.

Most of the controversies carried on among ordinary Christian people concerning moral conduct are, in reality, disputes between those who believe in living according to an absolute standard, regardless of the harm which such conduct may do in the actual situation as we find it, and those pragmatic Christians who believe that the course of action which answers in practice is therefore proclaimed to be the right one by virtue of its success.

The absolute standard, which would befit those who were living in the realized kingdom of heaven, is laid down for us in 'The Sermon on the Mount.' There we are given a picture of a society which never has, and perhaps never will, exist on this earth, a society in which all men are living according to the Will of God, and in which all their actions, untrammelled by the chain of 'our brute ancestry' and the evil heritage of bad traditions, are motivated solely by love for God and for one another. In such a society various courses of action are possible and right which, in such a society as that in which men live today, are neither possible nor right, because our brute ancestry is a great and ineluctible fact from which there is no present escape, and which compels us to action which has always within it the taint of sin. To ignore this fact is foolish, leading us into disastrous errors. 'We are all gone astray, and have all together

become abominable : there is none that doeth good, no not one.' We are not asked to say that human nature is wholly evil, but that it is never wholly good.

If all this is true, people may ask whether it is of much use to us to have the ideal put before us, seeing that we cannot live by it here. The answer is, of course, that the ideal conduct is the only conduct which can ultimately bring men happiness. Though we may not be able to live by it here, we have a duty to endeavour to get nearer to it. The more nearly we live by it, the more truly we are realizing our real nature. We are like men who have lost a leg or an arm. We are foolish to refuse to recognize the fact that we are thus disabled. To ignore our disability will probably bring about still further disablement. Yet we are wise never to forget that we are meant to have two arms and two legs, and thus we shall do our best to approximate, so far as we may, to the conduct which our true nature demands, and would, but for disablement, make normal to us.

There is a school of Christians which is constantly proclaiming how simple Christianity is. All we need, they will say, is to live by the Sermon on the Mount. Nothing, they say, is more simple, and nothing more than that can be required of any man. It will, however, not take long before such people find that to live according to such absolute standards is not only impracticable, but positively harmful. We may take a simple instance : 'Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn thou not away.' What infinite harm is done by those who, in our great towns, act upon this ideal. They encourage idleness and fraud, and support a race of men who live as parasites upon the community.

We all know the man who comes round and tells you that he knew you well some years ago, that he has a good situation promised him to-morrow, and only needs just the amount of his railway fare, which he will promise to repay to you within a week. He scornfully throws aside the suggestion that you should consult some society for the relief of distress. He just appeals to *you* as man to man, and if you can't believe him he will go sorrowfully away. Such people batten on the good folk who live by the Sermon on the Mount.

Or such a person as we have described, who lives by the

Sermon on the Mount, has lent some sum of money to his friend. Soon, the friend comes back. He asks for just one further loan. If only he has fifty pounds more, he and his poor wife and children will be set up for life. The man, remembering that we are told that if any man asks for our coat we are to let him have our cloak also, lends the extra fifty pounds. Never will he see either of his loans repaid. Nor will he have made a friend for life, which perhaps might be worth the loss of a hundred pounds. The man to whom he has lent the money will have become his enemy, unless he disappears altogether, and attaches himself to some other kindly and literally-minded Christian folk.

It is, I think, probable that the charge of hypocrisy so constantly made by foreigners against the Anglo-Saxon race is due to the fact that we have professed that we are living literally by a standard of absolute Christianity, whereas we have in fact been acting on the maxims best adapted to this present society in which we find ourselves, and have, in consequence, been led into courses of action which may well be the best available courses possible in any given emergency, but which, if considered as the natural and literal outcome of living by the ideal of the 'Sermon on the Mount,' are ludicrously hypocritical and insincere. We have, quite seriously, exported New Testaments to help foreigners to acquire the British system of morality, which is not the morality of Christ.

Let us now proceed to examine in detail some instances of the conflict between the ideal and the actual. Let us take the healing of bodily disease. The 'absolute' Christian rightly points out that Jesus did not resort to physicians and surgeons, nor did He need to make use of drugs in His healing ministry. He demanded nothing but faith. And He apparently expected that we should do even greater works than He did, and by the the same methods.

Taking literally this example, the simple faith-healer refuses to call in those whose profession it is to give material aid in illness, and, in consequence, the patient may die, when he would not have died if there had been shewn less rigidity in following after an ideal. It is true that the ideal of healing material ills by faith alone is one which in the future may be the only sane and practical procedure. It is well that we should

have this ideal constantly before us, and use it when it can be used, and expect that its range may, with increasing knowledge, be extended, but to use it to the exclusion of other remedies, in our present state of knowledge, is not only ineffectual but positively dangerous. We should be wrong not to expect a constant extension of the sphere in which physical conditions will yield to mental cure. We are not to acquiesce in the limitations which original sin and materialistic conditions impose upon us.

The Christian will always have in front of him the ideal conditions which belief in a Kingdom of God envisages. The obligation to face and take account of present limitations can never excuse him from the continuous search after a greater approximation to the ideal. The tension between the desire to live in the ideal world and the necessity, under which we all find ourselves, of living in a world still under the curse of sin, is one which every Christian man has to face, unless he shuts his eyes either to the one or the other of these conditions. Either he will have to make up his mind to cut himself off from all traffic with the world as it is, and live in a segregated and select community, like the early Christian Church of Jerusalem, from a common fund, and (all too probably), like 'the poor saints in Jerusalem,' accept occasional doles from less ideally-minded Christians outside that community, or he must live in a world, and profit by the commerce of a world, which is organized on sub-Christian lines, on a basis which can only win a very partial loyalty from a Christian-minded man.

That there *is* a tension cannot be denied. The man who is in business—that is, the overwhelming majority of Christian men—finds himself inevitably immeshed in an organization which, on the principles of the Sermon on the Mount, cannot win anything like complete loyalty. This may arise either from the nature of the objective of the business or from its methods, or from both together. He may find himself working for an admirably conducted firm devoted to the manufacture of lethal weapons, or he may find himself working for a firm devoted to the sale of Bibles and hymn-books, but where the conditions of living are deplorable, where the interests of shareholders are constantly preferred to those of the employee, and competition with rival firms carried out without mercy or compunction. How-

ever well the business may be conducted, it is unlikely that he will find that its conduct can be squared with the precepts of absolute Christianity. Indeed, even if he be an employee of the Church, would he be likely to find that there would be anything approaching to ideally Christian business methods? The rich clergyman would not share his wealth with the poor one: the retired bishop is supposed to require four times as much support as the retired parish priest. In the Church he would have to be satisfied with only a very imperfect approximation towards a system of ideal justice.

In such circumstances, what is the duty of the Christian man? It might be possible for him so to segregate himself from the imperfect and partially sinful organization of Church and State and live with other groups of idealists in complete separation from these very imperfect societies. If he does not do this, he cannot, certainly, completely identify himself with the world's practices and ethical codes. It is, therefore, necessary that he should live in a state of tension most often only very incompletely realized, accepting the very imperfect standards of the world, and at least partially conscious all the time that he is not living by Christ's standards of perfection. This tension, and the suffering which it will produce, will induce the Christian man to be continually trying to improve the social and economic conditions of his environment, bringing them, if only a little, nearer to an ideal standard.

It is indeed possible that those who have been influenced by Barthian theology will come to the conclusion that it is better not even to attempt to remould this world after the pattern of the mind of Christ. I was told by a German pastor, a few years ago, that the spread of Barthian ideas in the German Church had brought about a cessation of all social interests and undertakings, and had thus perhaps alienated from the Church those who care most deeply for the improvement of economic conditions. This is much less likely to happen in England. The English Churches are, through their participation in the national temperament, ready to accept compromises, and would look askance at any form of religion which did not demonstrate its principles and beliefs in its social practice. Rightly or wrongly, the English Christian feels that the Gospel is a gospel for this

present world and that half of the divine loaf is better than no bread at all.

This tension between the ideal and the immediately practical course shews itself in education. We now have some schools in which all punishment and all imposed morality have been abandoned. A boy may pour water down his master's neck, and the master may not retaliate for fear that he may interfere with the boy's liberty of moral growth. If the boy asks for his master's coat, or even takes it forcibly, the master must offer his cloak also. This type of school is not likely to commend itself to the British parent. We see, instead, a type of school in which the Law is only very gradually, but quite perceptibly, succeeded by the Gospel, where coercion gives place to a relationship of love and confidence between teacher and pupil, but where, at the same time, the Law, with its penalties, is not laid aside but is, literally, the schoolmaster which brings us to Christ. The wise teacher will have always before his eyes the ideal of bringing the child into such direct contact with his own God-implanted ideal (the implanted Word) that no exterior compulsion may be necessary, but until such a contact is achieved he will not be ashamed of such external admonitions, whether of a physical or mental kind, as may further his growth in morality and wisdom. Nor, I think, will the schoolmaster be ashamed of helping his pupil to take his place without intolerable strain of conscience in that very partially Christianized pagan society in which his lot is likely to be cast.

What we have said of education is equally true of the criminal code. We are sure that if the Church were in fact what it is in ideal, the Body of Christ, the living expression of His Spirit, instead of being far too much given to the art of the simultaneous worship of God and Mammon, it would be possible to reclaim criminals into membership of such an ideal society, and the only punishment which such criminals would suffer would be the remorse which their injury to the society would cause them.

Such a situation is plainly the one which we are bound to envisage. The diminution in the number of our prisons is a sign that we are making some progress in a true direction. But we are still very far from the goal, and it may be that we are on

the verge of a great collapse of the social structure, and a return for a time to the jungle law. Meanwhile, the Christian man will not be wrong in bolting his door at night, and in handing over the burglar to the justice of the State. Here, again, the Christian has to be guided by an interim law of conduct, keeping his eye fixed on the ideal, and strenuously making what approximation he can towards it, while he acts by such a law as is alone possible if we are to avoid the worst evils which would befall a very imperfect society which refused to protect itself by the imperfect weapons of the flesh.

This tension of which I have been speaking is specially obvious in regard to sexual morality. The teaching of Jesus speaks of the union of male and female as of divine ordinance, which man is not to put asunder. In the ideal society such a union would be divinely brought about, and would be by its nature indissoluble. But in the actual circumstances of an imperfect society marriages are, probably in a majority of cases, not made with any reference, either conscious or unconscious, to God, and of such people it cannot be said that they are joined together by God, or that there is any reason to expect that their union will of necessity be indissoluble. To keep such people married against their will, and often to the great injury of their own characters and those of their children, is not any interest of Church or State.

Those who have watched the results of divorce and re-marriage would not, I believe, be at all prepared to say that a person who has made a failure of one marriage is certain to make a failure of a second. Some good people, re-married after divorce, are making admirable members of the Christian society, participating in its fellowship and sacraments with the full approval of the authorities of the Church. Here again we are compelled to see the rightness of dealing with an unideal situation, not by an insistence upon conduct which would be normal in an ideal society, but by insistence upon such an approximation to the ideal as is possible in a society founded upon mixed motives and following after an ideal insecurely held and only dimly apprehended. By not insisting upon the ideal, we do, in fact, achieve a closer approximation to it than we should otherwise gain.

A sexual problem will confront the Church in the near future which will test its utmost wisdom to solve. There will be an insistent demand by the State to increase or maintain the population, seriously depleted by war, without which increase all our sacrifices will be in vain. There will be a great excess of young marriageable women. There will probably be an offer from the State of maintenance for all mothers and infants until the children are able to maintain themselves. The natural biological urge for motherhood will be enforced by the highest motives of patriotism. The Church cannot pretend to ignore this problem, nor can it be content with expressions of sorrow or condemnation. In some way or other the Christian conscience will have to confront boldly and sympathetically a very unideal situation brought about by the sinful conditions of war. We may be fairly sure that the problem will not be met, as Mahomet met it, by organized and regularized polygamy, nor, as the mediaeval Church met it, by the offer of the nunnery for women who cannot find a suitable partner for marriage. Somehow or other the problem must be faced, with charity and boldness, and without losing sight of the ideals for which marriage was ordained. When it comes upon the horizon it will be a very real test for Christian statesmanship.

The last example which I will offer of this tension between the ideal and the relative is the very pressing problem of war and the conscientious objection felt by many religiously minded persons to partaking in it. Again we see clearly that in an ideally constituted, Christianly minded society war would be an anachronism and a crime. But, as in the other instances which I have touched upon — in commerce, in education, in criminal practice, and in problems of sex — we are not dealing with a Christian or an ideal society, and it is at least possible that attempts to deal with the problems raised by war by standards applicable to a perfect society might be just as disastrous to society as they plainly are in the other instances which I have chosen. It is untrue to say that no great causes have been won by war. Slavery has been banished from East Africa, and some sort of stable society established and maintained by the activities of the British Navy in putting down the slave trade. The Sudan has been changed from an inferno of wickedness to a centre of

African culture by the successful military defeat of the Mahdi. No unprejudiced person could deny such achievements, without being guilty of that sin against the Holy Ghost which consists in seeing good deeds done and attributing them to the power of Satan. The Christian conscience, by and large, and with some few exceptions, has here, as in other departments of moral life, recognized that there are cases where the attempt to apply the undiluted ideal to very unideal conditions may actually lead to maintaining and increasing the Kingdom of Satan.

As I have already said, the English temperament is, perhaps, all too prone to accept compromises, and judge of the value of the compromise by its practical results. 'The proof of the pudding is in the eating' is a typically English maxim, but it is, after all, only another version of our Lord's maxim, 'By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?' I think we have no need to be ashamed of our national confidence in illogical compromises which issue in good results.

The new generation which is about to enter the strife of this world will have, it must be feared, a hard and bitter course to run, but one of absorbing interest. Never has there been a greater destruction of worldly traditions. The removal of all our finger-posts is perhaps a parable of what will happen in the moral sphere. Terrible indeed the future may be, but, as I believe, how full of hope! Things which can be shaken are being removed, that those which cannot be shaken may remain.

So let our exhortation to the young who are to take our place in a world stripped bare by the hurricane of war be that which the Lord gave to His followers in like circumstances: 'When these things begin to come to pass then rejoice and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.'

CONSTRUCTIVE CHRISTIAN MODERNISM

A FAITH FOR TO-DAY

By the Rev. T. Wigley, M.A., Chairman of the Union of Modern Free Churchmen, and author of *A New Highway towards Christian Reality, The Necessity of Christian Modernism*, etc.

MRS. Stowe in her *Old Town Folks* introduces us to one Sam Lawson, and the protest he made against the kind of preaching he had listened to.

> 'Wal',' said Sam, 'Parson Simpson's a smart man, but I tell ye it's kind of discouragin'. Why, he said our state and condition by nature was jest like this. We was clear down in a well fifty feet deep, and the sides all round nothin' but glare ice; but we was under immediate obligation to get out, 'cause we was free, voluntary agents. But nobody ever had got out, and nobody would, unless the Lord reached down and took 'un. And whether he would or not nobody could tell; it was all sovereignty. He said there w'ant one in a hundred, not one in a thousand—not one in ten thousand—that would be saved. Lordy massy, says I, if that's so, they're any of 'em welcome to my chance. And so I kind o' riz up and come out.'

A great number of people, with less reason than Sam Lawson, has to-day followed his action, so far as the conventional expression of religion is concerned; they have 'kind o' riz up and come out' to lose themselves in a fog of indifference, or to enlist under one of the many banners upon which are inscribed the words *Thou shalt not think*. That all is not well either with the world or with the common presentation of Christianity in our churches is apparent to the most casual observer of the modern scene; that the confusion of the world is intimately connected with the confusion of faith I am convinced. The root of our present disorder is religious. If, as someone has said, religion added drama to the life of the Victorians, and comfort to the life of the Edwardians, he would be a bold man who could answer glibly what exactly religion means to the life of to-day. To-day's needs are as obvious as to-day's rejections. Once there was a system of thought and life generally accepted as Christian, to it appeal could be made; now the system has disappeared,

eaten away by the acids of modernity. What is to take its place? What attitude can the modern world adopt amid disappearing landmarks?

The first essential is to recognize what the situation is in a spirit as sympathetic as it is candid. Mushy-mindedness can do nothing to help either inside or outside the churches. Certain signs of awakening give us grounds for hope. In a supplement (No. 13) to *The Christian News-Letter* of January 24th, 1940, extracts are given from letters of men of standing in their professions and in the general life of the community. The editor, Dr. J. H. Oldham, remarks that, 'taken together, the letters show how vast is the task which confronts the Church in this bewildering and bewildered world.' One of the writers is primarily concerned with the social and international situation. He says:

> 'We have talked vaguely of democracy, still more vaguely of Christianity, and we have been content to repose as comfortably as the times allowed on the sofa of national tradition. . . . The time is ripe for an approach, for an active, truly Christian campaign which can put into the hearts of those who are seeking for a real purpose in life, for a future based on truth and hope, a definite basis on which to plan the future.'

Another strikes a different note, and urges that the prerequisite of any reawakening of religious faith must be a clearer statement by the Church of what essential religion means and demands, and—equally necessary—of what it does not mean and demand.

> 'There are,' he says, 'many things in the faith of our fathers which never will or can or should be reawakened. They were appropriate and effective symbols or forms of expression in their days, but not in these days. Many of them are not of the substance of the faith, but they have been stressed so much that they are often imagined to be so. I believe that it is in no small measure because the Church is unwilling or unable or afraid to revise some of its doctrines and practices, pretty thoroughly and avowedly, that it is losing its grip, and is therefore trying all sorts of secondary things, from social reform to psychotherapy, in a vain effort to regain power. I feel that sometimes the Church is far too quiet about this, taking great heed that it offends not—the old ones. I know personally of one deservedly admired minister in this city (now dead) who was entirely unaware that his healthy presentation of the Gospel was being nullified in a very important way by an elderly spinster who was teaching the crudest hell-fire to the children in his Sunday school. And I wonder whether, if he had known, he would have withstood her to her face because she was to be blamed, as that might have caused a good deal of talk at the sewing meeting.'

He concludes his letter by asking,

> 'How in the world are you going to teach the Gospel of Christianity in the national schools if half the teachers and parents don't believe it? There are lots of people (like me) who aren't a bit indifferent, who are informed along the Christian faith and find no conviction, but, on the contrary, perhaps, find quite a different conviction. It isn't a case of waking them up. And you can't very well beat them down.'

I have quoted this letter because I consider it important as being typical of a considered opinion widely shared. But there is further evidence. The *Times* in a leader in its issue of February 17th, 1940, on 'Religion and National Life,' pointed out that one of the incidental results of the evacuation scheme had been the discovery that large numbers of town children are being brought up with no religious knowledge at all, that of thirty-one children in one class, average age of 12, nineteen did not know who was born on the first Christmas Day. Further questions showed that they knew absolutely nothing of the Bible and had never been taught to pray. When we turn to America we get much the same story. Says a Professor of Philosophy (Georgia Harkness, *Recovery of Ideals*, p. 12):

> 'What ails these youth fundamentally—and to a large degree their elders—is that they have no center of stability in their lives. The old moorings are gone and no new ones have been found. Hope and courage have not gone out of the lives of common men, but they are ebbing. When they go, the game will be up for social and political civilization. But more imminent and therefore more serious is the fact that it is already up for great numbers of individuals in contemporary life.'

From this and much further evidence which might be brought forward we are compelled to face the fact that the modern world as well as the modern mind is in a critical situation politically, economically, and religiously. Either we shall partake in a renaissance and a reformation unexampled in any previous age, or we shall revert to a lower level of superstition and crudity, all the more degrading because of the glimpses we have had of better things.

As I have already said, I am personally convinced that religion is, as it has always been, a vital element in the life of mankind; its presence or absence will therefore make a profound difference in the developments of civilization. If such is the case, then the all-important question is this, 'Can Christianity become the religion of reason and science as well as of emotion

and faith, and be made the power for individual and social progress which its Founder intended?' That question was asked, strange to say, not by a theologian but by a man of science, Professor E. G. Conklin, in his work, *The Direction of Human Evolution*. And it is in proportion to the recognition by the man of science of his own implicit faith, and by the theologian of the necessity of a deepening understanding of the universe which science provides, that we may hope to reach a faith which is both rational and religious. A theology which is not in harmony with the whole life of man profiteth nothing, since the more truth is enlarged and error eliminated in any sphere, the more we know of God.

It is necessary to stress this wholeness of truth in view of the swift tides of irrationalism which are to-day carrying off their feet individuals and nations. Nothing is easier than to play the sceptic, and there are few entirely consistent, but as a matter of history scepticism ends either in utter pessimism or in the most reactionary traditionalism. It was a good many years ago that L. T. Hobhouse made the observation in his *Metaphysical Theory of the State* (p. 234) that

> 'The history of our time shows that if men no longer believe in God, they will make themselves gods of power, of evolution, of the race, the nation or the state.'

Since he wrote those words, they have been amazingly confirmed. When in the popular mind religion is identified with theological beliefs which have quietly crumbled away, we cannot be surprised that religion has ceased to have any guiding control over the thoughts and actions of large masses of people. The result is a violent reversion to pagan attitudes, a dogged stiffening in defence of traditionalism, a retreat from the world with its claims and responsibilities, or, on the part of a minority, an attempt to attain a higher level of organization by new adjustments less fragmentary and more complete since they take into account the wholeness of many's many-sided life. We may take courage in these days of trial and error from the fact that Christianity has shown itself remarkably adaptable through the centuries in meeting new needs. As Dr. Shailer Mathews remarks:

> 'Jewish Christianity fulfilled the hopes of the Jews; patristic Christianity gave metaphysical satisfaction to those who wished for

immortality; Roman Christianity gave order and unity to the western world; Protestantism satisfied the souls that had been touched by the new spirit of nationalism and economic independence. Each advance broke the mortmain of the past and led to reformation. Christians have never had a static system of philosophy or a finished theology' (*Faith of Modernism*, 2).

Let us examine a little more closely these main currents of the modern world: one of them rejoices in being ice-bound with no movement, another flows backward, another thrusts its turbulent waters across every barrier, yet another seeks the quiet backwater to be left in peace, while another flows on rejecting stagnation but not without control. To give them names which describe their attitude and tendency, there is the Roman Catholic which, while not as static as it sometimes professes to be, nevertheless maintains that 'a faith that does not comprise all of the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church is no faith at all,' that 'he who neglects the use of the means of grace cannot be saved,' that is to say, 'the holy sacrifice of the mass, the sacramentals, and prayer' (F. Spirago, *The Catechism Explained*). There is no need to illustrate further; we are all familiar with this system which claims to be able to control the relationship between God and man by means of its own reservoir of revelation and pipelines through which alone salvation may be brought.

More significant is the stream running swiftly backwards in some circles of religious thought and slowing down as it approaches the harbour of Geneva dominated by the figure of John Calvin. This way appears to have a strange attraction for those who have lost self-confidence, have little or no sense of man's worth, and still less for any idea of man's possible initiative in entering into fellowship with God. A religion, or rather a theology, which glories in the declaration that 'God is wholly other' and man wholly nothing is the product of despair, and logically can lead only to a pious resignation which folds its hands and finds refuge in the confession that the world is very evil, the times are out of joint. Dr. Kraemer, a typical representative of this point of view, goes so far as to say in his book, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, that

'the mystic who triumphantly realizes his essential one-ness with God or the Divine . . . and who by his marvellous feats of self-restraint and spiritual self-discipline offers a fascinating example of splendid humanity, commits in this sublime way the root-sin of mankind, "to be like God."'

And Principal Micklem proclaims in a moment of ecstasy,

> 'the ineffable condescension of Almighty God, the Son of God that took a servant's form "for us men and for our salvation." This in epitome is the message of the Bible; this is declared in the creeds and confessions of the Church; this is at the heart of all the Church's liturgies; this is the theme of the Church's hymnody.'

If this is the result of Barth's alarm-bell summoning us to a realistic theology, it is time that we raised once more the cry, 'Son of man, stand upon thy feet,' and with Lowell declare

> 'Perhaps the deeper faith that is to come
> Will see God rather in the strenuous doubt
> Than in the creed held as an infant's hand
> Holds purposeless whatso is placed therein.'

What may be called the twin secular religions of Communism and Nazi-fascism have in recent days intoxicated the minds of large numbers. Their methods are imprisonment and terrorization of all who venture to dissent from the gospel according to Marx, Mussolini or Hitler. Regimented robotism takes the place of any genuine development of personality, in practice if not always in theory. In the light of the latest developments of the faithful communists we rub our eyes with surprise as we read Marx's condemnation of the state as 'a public force organized for social servitude,' the 'engine of the despotism of a class,' and that it must be replaced by 'the free federation of all men' (*La Guerre civile en France*). Thus Marx becomes the founder of a religion, but is speedily left behind by his zealous adherents who dogmatically assert not as means but as end 'the dictatorship of the proletariat.' The Nazi-fascist system is less coherent, but in Mussolini's words (*Italian Encyclopedie*, 848), 'demands remaking not the forms of human life, but the contents; man, character, faith.' Those who need to be convinced of the essential alikeness of these twin secular religions will find it abundantly proved by Walter Lippmann in his book, *The Good Society*, published in 1937, *i.e.* before the recent agreement between Germany and Russia, in which he says:

> 'The totalitarian states, whether of the fascists or the communist persuasion, are more than superficially alike as dictatorships, in the suppression of dissent, and in operating planned and directed economies. They are profoundly alike. For they have the identic controlling principle, which is the militarization of a people to the maximum degree. . . . They are both organizing for war' (89).

The attack, you will notice, is not only against any form of

Christian thought, but against any sort of Christian moral ideas; they represent definite dynamic movements to pagan thoughts and pagan ways which we cannot afford to ignore as the ravings of hysterical minds.

We are not surprised, as we consider these currents of the modern world, that some people should now be seeking relief from the pressure of conflicting forces by preaching a gospel of detachment. It is a gospel as old as ancient China which Mr. Arthur Waley describes for us so felicitously and so lucidly in his studies (*The Way and its Power*, *Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China*). We have instilled, as in Taoism, the virtues of non-resistance. Be wise and passive when you fall, like the drunkard. 'If such integrity of the spirit can be got from wine, how much greater must be the integrity that is got from Heaven?' Be wise, do not struggle with circumstances, let life flow over and around you. The strength of the wise man lies in his detachment. Echoes of this ancient philosophy are to be found in modern writers. Mr. Gerald Heard in his *Pain, Sex and Time*, a blue-print of a reconditioned world, provides for a flexible caste system with an élite of monastically trained neo-Brahmins at the top and routineer masses at the base. He pours scorn on 'futile democracies.' Mr. Aldous Huxley in his *Ends and Means* urges a doctrine of non-attachment, of negation of desire, which goes far along the Buddhist way. And F. Creedy in his *Human Nature Writ Large* writes:

> 'The free man merely takes a certain attitude towards all kinds of life that are lived in the world—an impersonal attitude.'

None of these writers is entirely consistent in the attitude he takes up, and much might be said in elucidation; they do, however, illustrate a current which is important coming when it does and from those who are creating it.

In such a world with its rushing streams and eddying waters we who desire to be rational and religious find ourselves. We seek a way in thought and life which is constructive and Christian; we shall find such a way and make progress along it, not by tethering ourselves to any sign-posts whatsoever, but by adopting an attitude of expectation and desire which shuts its eyes to no facts however ugly, and yet is so thorough-going in its realism that it recognizes that truth may be discovered, that goodness must be embodied, that beauty manifests itself. Reality

which is thus apprehended by us along this three-fold path is one and indivisible, and our reaction to it in its totality is our religion. Such an attitude is in the truest sense of the word scientific; it is concerned with ordered knowledge, its supreme virtue is its truthfulness. The day when either science or religion could see the universe in bits is passing. We have to do with a universe, for there is a wholeness in things from which we cannot escape, and the more truly scientific we become the more we advance in religious ways. A religion which is static in its traditionalism is as false to truth as it is to experience, for, as Dr. C. J. Wright observes:

> 'Those who believe in God as the Transcendent Ground and as the Immanent Reason of the universe must perforce be wholehearted in their zeal to discover the mode by which He works.'

And if we include in nature, as we must, man himself, how else can we know anything of God?

In science and in religion our confidence in the validity of our results can rest only on our prior faith in the integrity of the processes by which we reach them. In science and in religion there is the first all-important question, 'What are the facts?' Which when answered immediately raises yet another question, *viz.* 'What do these facts mean to and for us?' Can we wonder that in the light of these two questions many of our theological notions inherited from the past appear to the modern mind not merely mistaken but irrelevant? When our theology blinds us to facts in any realm, it is time for us to take ourselves seriously in hand. Nor should we forget what the Fourth Gospel took such pains to make clear, that what we have received from Jesus was not a statement of faith once for all delivered, but a spirit dwelling within us which should lead us into all truth. There is no end to that way nor to the inspiration of that leadership, and if the modern world is to be religious at all, it will be by rising to a realistic and wholehearted belief in God as Creative Holy Spirit. A dogged fidelity in the repetition of largely misleading formulae is an abandonment of the Christian way, and can lead only to its rejection by the modern mind. We need to enlarge our idea of God, and to free Him from the strait-jacket of obsolete thoughts and phrases in which we have been accustomed to confine Him. As a modern writer, Willard L. Sperry, Dean of the Theological School in Harvard University puts it, 'Either

we are involved in and with the universe or religion is the ultimate delusion.' And Cardinal Newman, a hundred years ago, said. 'Nothing is easier than to say "God" and mean nothing by it.' It is because the average man does not know what to make of God that religion is ceasing to have any hold on him.

How then shall we use this 'one word above all others which any religion must utter'? When Paul reminded his Athenian hearers that God 'is close to each one of us, for it is in Him that we live and move and exist,' he might well have added 'in whom all things exist,' for He is the ground of all being, the principle of unity in the universe. It is not unreasonable to suggest that He meets us as we tread the ways of goodness, truth and beauty, and that in such discovery-revelation religion has its being. There is a cosmic community organized at different levels of reality, and God is the spirit of that community, transcending in so far as there is no limit to His creativity, but immanent in ever-increasing degree as we ascend the spiral of existence. It is a way which any man may follow, an attitude, a faith — call it what we will — but if we are faithful we discover One 'who works in evolution and in human history; who is as loving and sympathetic as Jesus Christ, to Whom we can pray with full trust in His power and love; who justifies our attempt to be loving; who helps and transforms us' (S. Mathews, *The Faith of Modernism*, p. 120).

This modernist faith provides four essentials lacking which civilization no less than religion will disintegrate and decay. They are these: a true catholicity, a genuine sacramentalism, a ground for social and individual endeavour, and, above all, a contemporaneous quality of religion in life and thought. God is not the God of the dead but of the living, and belongs not only to days gone by but is the most significant fact in the world today. I say a true catholicity because any other adjective at once limits, and thus denies, catholicity; it becomes a part claiming to be the whole. By its emphasis on the wholeness of things Christian modernism refuses to recognize the traditionalist dilemma so commonly presented in the form of either/or We are asked to choose between either the sacred or the secular, either faith or reason, either the divine or the human, either the Bible as the infallible Word of God or as a collection of religious myths and legends. We reject the validity of these and

similar alternatives. It is in this divorcing of our religion from reality that religion dies, and the modernist is not prepared to empty man's ever-growing interests of all religious value and significance; the cul-de-sac is not a way that leads to God.

A true catholicity inevitably involves a genuine sacramentalism. That most stimulating Oxford philosopher, R. G. Collingwood, has trenchantly pointed out the price which the modern world has paid for its disruption of its life and thought, each department going on free from all claims on the part of the rest:

> 'We are wrecks and fragments of men, and we do not know where to take hold on life and how to begin looking for the happiness which we know we do not possess. What is wrong with us is precisely the detachment of those forms of experience—art, religion and the rest—from one another; and our cure can only be their reunion in a complete and undivided life. . . . It is the fundamental principle of Christianity that the only life worth living is the life of the whole man, every faculty of body and soul unified into a single organic system' (*Speculum Mentis,* 34 f.).

Who then can dare to crib, cabin, and confine God, and cry out 'blessed is the fragmentary'? Especially when we realize that we are part of what Dr. Temple has well called a 'sacramental Universe.' Julian of Norwich from before 1400 answers the modern archbishop, 'We are all in Himself enclosed, and He is enclosed in us'; and Von Hügel, Roman Catholic modernist and mystic, declares that

> 'the central conviction and doctrine of Christianity is . . . the penetration of spirit into sense, of the spaceless into space, of the Eternal into time, of God into man.'

Could a better Faith be found than this as an inspiration in social and individual endeavour? In this faith we are concerned not with robots but souls in the making, with the enlargement of personality, of opportunity for self- and other-realization, of the establishment of a realm of mutual love and service. On the social field a true catholicity goes into action convinced that the human becomes more truly human when it becomes the medium of the divine and all life sacramental. We seek refuge in no denials; we do but urge that the time has come for the great and glorious affirmations that God is Creative Holy Spirit and that in the interpenetration of spirit with sense all life may become holy. From such fundamental religious and moral convictions can alone come that world of peace, justice and goodwill so much to be desired, for it is a striking fact that no civilization

has long survived the destruction of the religious setting for its *mores*; behind all social action lies a social philosophy, and behind that a valuing attitude towards the universe which we call our religion. In the future we shall be content with a reduced body of alleged theological truth, but we shall never outgrow the necessity of a faith which holds that the Creative Power of the universe stands in a fatherly relation to us, and that in order to live rightly those who claim to be His children must learn and conform to the laws of harmonious and successful living together. Or, if we prefer more philosophical language, L. T. Hobhouse puts it in a sentence:

> 'Reality is an interconnected system which develops in time, the principle of rational harmony and love being the permanent underlying ground of development' (*The Rational Good*, 227).

There is, I would urge, in this modernist faith a contemporaneous quality which not only distinguishes it from a faith which sees God at work only in the past and among certain people, but should definitely appeal to those who are rightly concerned with the here and now. Unless I know God in my world the testimony of other ages can mean nothing to me. Unless I can find religious value and meaning in the amazing world of the twentieth century, it profiteth me nothing that, say, Isaiah saw God high and lifted up in the eighth century B.C. The framework of my world differs from his, and it is within my framework and not his that I must be able to find my God. In the name of truth as well as of religion, therefore, I cannot turn my back upon my world. In this world God must be realized, and in the now in which for each one of us past and future meet. The need is for experiment as well as experience, for a dynamic venturing rather than for a marking-time or standing still, remembering always that the worth of our doing will depend upon the truth of our thinking. We cannot with safety continue to ignore the truth of things. The times demand, in A. C. McGiffert's words,

> 'a new interpretation of religion — broader, more humane and, if you will, more secular; a new interpretation of humanity—more charitable, more idealistic and more trustful.'

The new material demands new patterns and new treatment; setting ourselves in this faith to the task of God-realization and self-realization, convinced also that the world can be saved by our faithfulness, we may face to-day and to-morrow with hope and courage.

CHRISTIANITY AND NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS

By A. C. Bouquet, D.D., Recognized Lecturer in the History and Comparison of Religions in the University of Cambridge.

RELIGION as the chief integrating factor in each human life is of two main sorts: (1) ethnic, (2) universal. The religions of a Papuan, a Japanese Shintoist,[1] and a Nazi are all three fundamentally ethnic, whatever their outward appearance. The interest is vertical rather than horizontal, and the idea of the brotherhood of human beings and of a common world-faith simply does not exist.

As compared with these, the religious doctrines of the Stoic, the Christian, the Communist, or the Moslem are essentially intended to be universal. Whether the Self-Existent Deity be Nous, Zeus, Pater Noster, the Dialectic Process, or Allah, fellow-believers are knit in a federal union of the intensest kind, and one which over-steps the limits of blood and race, and would wish to embrace all persons of good-will, excluding none save on the grounds of disbelief.

It is with the latter type of religion that I propose here to concern myself. The present armed attack is an attack not merely upon genuine Christianity, but upon those universalist systems which either precede it (such as Buddhism or Stoicism) or which share with it a common root or are dialectically related to it (such as Islam or Communism). Looking to the future, the Christian might indeed be tempted to consider the possibility of a federation of world-faiths, on the assumption that the universalist religions possess a common factor which overrides their differences, and that ethnic religion has proved itself bankrupt, though dangerous, and even plausible. This idea certainly appeals to some, and I wish to examine some reasons for thinking that it is an idea which, however attractive, presents certain logical difficulties and objections. Much as we may at this time desire to

[1] By this I mean, of course, State Shinto. Sect Shinto is in some cases a very different affair.

stress anything which seems to unite us in a strong fellowship against the divisive forces of the jungle, with their assertion that there is no 'humanity' but only a congeries of warring subspecies, and no single beneficent Deity who wills all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of truth — much, I say, as we may desire to unite, we cannot fail to be conscious that Christians in federating with non-Christians are liable to cast away their birthright, unless they recognize what they are doing and act with a certain reservation.

I would wish therefore to examine the situation afresh, and to see whether there is not some common factor *other than universalism* which can relate the Christian religion to the various universalist faiths in such a way as to suggest to those who profess them, not that they are wholly mistaken, or that Christians have a monopoly of the truth, but that the Christian faith is in some very remarkable fashion the fulfilment of all that a universalist religion should be. This may seem to some of my readers to involve wishful thinking. I can only assure them that my desire is precisely to avoid it. But I cannot help seeing that were the Christian communities to be at one fell swoop bombed out of existence, the world would be like a watch with its mainspring broken.

My main thesis is that while certain features which are the obvious accompaniments of a universalist religion, such as the capacity to make disciples in any climate and under any sociological conditions, are present in Christianity to a degree only approached perhaps in Communism, there is also present in Christianity a central and dominant feature which, though lacking in the official version of these other systems, seems to be needed by them, and the absence of which argues a certain inadequacy, so that they tend to find a place for it as a semi-official addition. The specific doctrine of Christianity is its once-for-all Incarnation, with its accompanying act of At-one-ment. Put in the language of philosophical theology, this means that the appearance of Jesus in Palestine is held to possess as much cosmic significance as the creation of the cosmos itself. It means that man as a species is of such a quality that God can act through a single human life discontinuously and decisively, and that a single brief piece of individual history may be as

important cosmically as the age-long evolution of organic life.

Now the other systems which claim fitness to be universal begin by dispensing with such an element, but always end by introducing it somewhere, if only by a side-door. Though owing their rise to a founder, the founder is at first merely a channel for the declaration of a doctrine. His own example and career add little or nothing to that doctrine, of which he is simply the mouthpiece; and the course of events, including his career, is itself devoid of significance. But the idea that a life lived is the greatest self-expression of Self-Existent Deity, and that something done is of higher significance than something spoken, sooner or later emerges as supreme truth.

Thus Buddhism, beginning as a derivative from the age of the Upanishadic and Sankhya philosophies of India, ends by adopting as its cardinal tenet the doctrine of the Great Purusha (similar to the One Atman of higher Hinduism), and sees in Gotama a supreme even if not unique spatio-temporal manifestation of that one Being who is the 'Buddha-nature,' the spiritual Principle of the Universe—supreme among many Bodhisattvas, who refrain from beatitude out of compassion for mankind. The higher Hinduism (less universalistic, it is true) presents a similar feature. Oscillating away from non-duality, it finds rest in the familiar words of the Gita:

> 'For whensoever the law fails and lawlessness uprises, O thou of Bharata's race, then do I bring Myself to bodied birth: to guard the righteous, to destroy evil-doers, to establish the law, I come into birth age after age':

and in the Ramayana (as much as in the Gita) declares its adherence to a belief in a discontinuous *avatar* ('Who for us men and our salvation came down from heaven.') The righteous King Rama, who for love of his people renounces his throne and lives for some years in poverty and homelessness, and is then restored and received up into heaven, whence as the incarnation of Vishnu he proceeded forth, and to which he returns, glorified and re-enthroned—here is an instance of a pattern which we all can recognize as familiar. (It is perhaps just worth recording that King George V and Gandhiji have both been acclaimed in India as avatars of Vishnu!)

Greek thought, moving from Platonism to Stoicism, propounds eventually the doctrine of the Logos, and begins groping

about for historical examples of Logos-Incarnation. (There is *some* evidence that Herakles was interpreted in this way.) Finally it finds fruition in Hellenistic Christian theology, the first classic expression of which is the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel. Later Hebrew thought likewise, though steadfastly equating Yahweh with the unconditioned Absolute, comes to believe in the localised self-expression of the latter as the Shekinah, and in the need of a Saviour or Messiah; and since we read 'Where two or three men are gathered to study the Torah, the Shekinah (Gk. δόξα) is in the midst of them,' it is not a long step from this to the phrase in the Greek *General Epistle of James*, which modern commentators think to be derived from an earlier Aramaic original, and render 'Have not the faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ — the Shekinah — with respect of persons.' In China, after about 206 B.C., begins the cultus of Confucius, not simply as a very human moralist, but as in some way the self-expression of High Heaven. In the early Roman Empire we find the poet Horace quite seriously referring to Octavian, the Saviour and Führer of the world of his day, as the incarnation of Mercury. In Islam, in spite of its intense unitarianism, there are curious traces of an emanation which is called an Amr, and Mohammed is addressed by Allah: 'Thus did we inspire thee with the spirit proceeding from our Amr.' The Imams who carry on the tradition are in effect more than prophets, and are quasi-incarnations of the spirit proceeding from Allah. Finally, even in Communism there is a veneration of Lenin, and perhaps also of Marx, which seems to suggest in a veiled manner that the Dialectic Process was doing something out of the ordinary when it caused these men to emerge.

My point is that a belief in man as 'capax revelationis,' as able to mediate to his fellow-men some discontinuous Divine Act, is in one form or another *natural* to mankind all the world over, and that it tends to force its way into systems which begin by trying to do without it.

What is the function of this discontinuity? What part does it play in the scheme of the religious life? The answer is plain. The discontinuous intervention is felt to be needed in order to counteract and set right something that is going or has gone wrong. Whatever the reason for it, human life is apprehended

as developing within itself an element of disharmony. Either it grows crooked, or falls short, or twists away from its true pattern. It cannot continue to be affirmed as 'very good.' Either suffering, or evanescence, or rebelliousness, or failure, or self-centredness causes an uneasiness to be felt. The thing itself may be mis-perceived, or inadequately described; but it is assuredly not illusion. Man needs not merely instruction or education, but rescue and redemption, and he cannot obtain it save from the Self-Existent in Whom he lives and moves. He cannot get it from himself. All is not well, and the tragedy could not have been averted save by making us all pure automata, deprived of any self-determination. This is irresistible logic; and no talk about any 'bungling giant,' who might have done better, can account for the situation; since without the freedom which is ours, nobility would be just as impossible as baseness. Yet the use of man by God to save his fellow-men, which is also part of the principle of Incarnation, restores man's self-respect and gives him encouragement. If he is conscious of his need, he is also, by God's action, conscious of his greatness.

We must conclude, then, that it is a sound intuition which makes man believe in the discontinuous action of Deity through men to save mankind, and to overrule its errors so as to bring a greater good out of them. It is this action which Matthew Arnold in *Rugby Chapel* seems to be trying to describe, though he no doubt would have said that he regarded Incarnation as a *plural* phenomenon.

If then to-day we find ourselves faced with a greater accumulation of knowledge about the worship of Incarnate divine saviours in the non-Christian world than heretofore, we shall do well not to scorn the records of such worship, or to treat it as false: for it is a sound instinct which has prompted it. And further, we shall return with relief and refreshment to the early Greek theology of the Christian Church, and especially to the familiar words of Justin, when he says:

> 'We have shown that Christ is the Word of whom the whole human race are partakers, and those who have lived according to reason are Christians, even though accounted atheists. Such among the Greeks were Socrates and Heracleitus, and those who resembled them; of the barbarians, Abraham and Ananias, and Azarias and Misael, and Elias, and many others.'

We may even expand this, and, joining it to his other declaration, 'Whatever all men have uttered aright belongs to us Christians,' add the names of Confucius, Gotama, Ramanuja, and Tulsi Das — among others.

But we cannot stop here. In so far as the Incarnation doctrines of India are the adumbrations of a true principle, we may declare that Rama, to the extent to which he is an historical character, is a genuine expression of the Logos. But we do right to insist that central in this galaxy of stars is that great Star of the first magnitude in whom tabernacled the supreme fulness of the Godhead. The words of Hooker in his third book[2] are no mere rhetoric, but stand good for to-day.

Thus between the various universalist faiths to mankind we may find, on the one hand, a real link, in that all of them sooner or later come to adopt an Incarnation doctrine of sorts. This renders it reasonable to believe that a central and absolute act of Incarnation is no extravagant absurdity, but a real possibility demanded by the conditions of human life : and it also renders it reasonable to concede that for lesser and local reasons the various non-Christian incarnations may have had a value of their own, both for their own people and their own age—perhaps also as types and foreshadowings of a greater and more perfect deliverance yet forthcoming. And we may even add that there may be lesser ones yet to come; for a saint is an Act of God, and it is sound doctrine that good Christians are extensions of the Life of Christ.

And yet, on the other hand, there is a marked difference, as well as a link. For the alleged once-for-all Divine Action in Jesus is different in quality from all the others. Placed in series with them, it stands at the head. (1) It is more completely historical than most of them. Tendencies which occur in the Apocryphal Gospels to desert fact for legend, to embroider truth, or even (as in the *Acts of John*) to abandon history in the typically Indian manner—all are rejected as the broad highway of Christian doctrine develops, and as the New Testament canon is formed. (2) The character of the Incarnate Lord is different. In Rama and in the Bodhisattvas, especially in Amitabha, there is undoubtedly present an element of genuine compassion and

[2] Hooker, *Eccl. Pol.*, Bk. 3, viii, 9.

philanthropic renunciation, but it is often based on legend prompted by wish-thinking, not on what *really happened*; and again, since there is little sense of sin, there is neither reparation nor reconciliation, and no crowning choice of the Cross. Confucius dies perhaps disillusioned and broken-hearted, but rather in the mood of Socrates than of Christ; and in the characters of both men there is something in the 'feel' which places them, in spite of their virtues, on a lower level than the Nazarene. In Islam the Incarnation element is less pronounced, and the stark severance between the Creator and the creaturely, together with the charlatanism of the Prophet, puts his foundation upon a permanently inferior basis. Later Imams show sensitiveness to Christian models, but none of them has been crucified for the world. Octavian and Lenin are merely examples of successful dictatorships. They reduce chaos to order, and, like modern exponents of the 'leadership principle,' are Sotērs who save people not from their sins but from political disintegration.

But Jesus occupies a solitary throne. As a historical, as an ethical, and as a spiritual manifestation, He evades classification with others. No one else has appeared, competent to take away the sin of the whole world.

I wish to be allowed to stress two further points. *First*, that the expansion of Christianity has been greater since about 1740 than ever before. Granted the three previous phases of expansion as given by Latourette, the fourth is still the most remarkable. It is not the case of something fading out, the more ancient it grows. On the contrary, the more frankly and critically we examine our faith, the less diffidence do we feel in commending it to others for general acceptance. The new native churches in Africa and Asia, let alone in areas of less magnitude such as Borneo and Madagascar, are now part of the evidence for the truth of Christianity, evidence which no truly scientific mind can with consistency ignore. *Second*, that whatever links we may detect with other faiths, the transition to Christian belief is always discontinuous and involves a sudden break with the past. I know, of course, that there have been in the course of Christian history instances of compromise and treaty with ethnic religions; but in the Bible and in the accredited apologies for the Christian faith there is never any wavering or temporizing:

there is no official condoning of animistic practices as among Moslems, no official assimilation of ethnic deities under the guise of Bodhisattvas, no toleration of polytheism or idolatry, as among the Hindus of the Vedanta. What Professor Hocking calls 'radical displacement' is the only doctrine officially countenanced, even though it may seem that much Mediterranean Catholicism has merely paid lip-service to it. There can be no smooth and harmonious evolution from (let us say) Buddhism to Christianity. It looks as though there ought to be: but in practice there isn't. At the same time any change-over which does occur is rendered possible through the solid fact that the other faiths of the world only become faiths for the mass of mankind through accepting the Incarnation-principle. It is native to humanity to look outside and beyond itself, and in this sense the saying of St. Augustine can be accepted as true: 'Christianity is the real natural religion of mankind.'

What all nations have come to desire, but have only partially secured, Christ can give them in full measure, not because their efforts were wholly vain, but because in the message and life of Jesus of Nazareth, in whom dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, we have a yet more excellent way, an Incarnation for the whole planet and for all time. Whatever deliverances other saviours may work or may have wrought, the advent of the historical Jesus is still the greatest deliverance. Even a non-Christian in India has, I think, the inkling that if it and its effects were to be abstracted from the world as it is, there would be very little light left. That it ever happened, and that it has borne fruit, especially in the 'Dark Ages' and in the past two hundred years, is our one great hope for the future. Then why not say so?

BOLSHEVISM AND NAZISM

By H. P. Kingdon, Fellow and Chaplain of Exeter College, Oxford.

IT is symptomatic of a very general change of outlook towards Bolshevism and Nazism that, whereas at the Modern Churchmen's Conference in 1937 two separate papers were devoted to these two subjects by readers who had considerable sympathy with the system allotted to them and antipathy towards the other, now the two ideologies have been assigned together to one who has not much sympathy with either but sees elements of strength in both. The Russo-German pact of August, 1939, gave rise to a stunned feeling that our hackneyed 'isms' had all become 'wasms'—as a wag at our startled Foreign Office neatly expressed it. And yet 'Brown Bolshevism' had already become a common phrase for the treatment meted out to the Jews and democrats of Germany; while Stalin had been hailed as a fellow-Fascist by no less an authority than Mussolini. It was already realized that the term 'totalitarian,' first used of the régime in Italy in 1926, was far more applicable to Russia. And writers such as F. A. Voigt, P. Drucker and Rauschning had foretold—amid the jeers of our more extreme left-wing and right-wing apologists—that the rival totalitarians would indeed come to terms. To these authors we return with an added respect. And the present writer, who has long felt that there was much in common between what he had read of Bolshevism and experienced of Nazism, is emboldened to tackle this difficult analysis, of which the lack of first-hand acquaintance with Soviet Russia would have otherwise led him to fight shy. For there do seem to be sufficient resemblances between the two ideologies to make it possible to attempt to discuss—even within the limits of this short paper—their common challenge to essential Christianity.

It seems best to start by summarizing the development of the two systems in turn, first defining carefully what we understand by some common terms which are too often loosely used. Thus we shall take 'communism' (and still more 'socialism') to be

primarily an *economic* term, contrasted (in the abstract, of course!) with 'capitalism' rather than with 'fascism,' which is a political concept (derived from *fasces*, the lictor's rods) and the opposite of 'democracy.' It is thus logically possible for either a communist or capitalist economic to be linked with a fascist or democratic politic. Indeed, democracy seems to go together with 'capitalism' (as in America), and communism with fascism, rather than the reverse. No democratic régime is nearly so socialist as Soviet Russia—or Nazi Germany, for that matter. That is why Communism is usually, and Bolshevism is always, taken to imply the readiness to use brute force. And it is a question whether the term 'social-democracy,' or better, 'democratic socialism' (Menshevism), is not in practice, and taken absolutely, self-contradictory. Although it may be possible, and desirable, to devise a social system both more democratic and more socialist than we have at present, yet, with human nature what it is, *complete* democracy spells anarchy and *complete* socialism tyranny.* Hence Marx' dislike of gradual reformists.

We shall treat Nazism and Bolshevism not only as political and economic systems, but as religions: and religion again is a vague term. We do not propose to confine it to ritualistic ceremonies, still less to transcendental theism (as Lenin), or 'what a man does with his solitariness' (Whitehead). We shall use it in its original sense as meaning 'what binds a man down' (Latin *religare*)—what ultimately directs and integrates his life. Especially in so far as Nazism and Bolshevism are totalitarian and allow no autonomous Church to check their decisions or challenge their authority, they are also religions, rendering to that modern Caesar, collectivized Humanity, the things that are God's. Nazism has obvious affinities with Shintoism, Roman Emperor-worship, and the Messianism of the Zealots: while Bolshevism, for all its atheism, is also Messianic—though its Messianism is more akin to Christian universalism than to Jewish

* Taking Socialism to mean the entire control of production by a centralized bureaucracy. Of course in more democratic forms of socialism the central control will be offset by the power of local corporations, representing regional interests. There is much more likelihood of this form of socialism (which can be combined with a measure of latitude even for private economic enterprise) remaining democratic—in the best sense of the term. The question is whether a fascist socialism, once established, can ever become democratic.

nationalism: it confidently expects to usher in the Kingdom of Heaven, if not of God, upon earth: and its protagonists even use *this* religion as 'an opiate for the people,' to keep still the murmurings and the questionings of those who might wonder whether their best interests are really served by the iron tyranny exercised by the 'party' and the Ogpu.

The theory, or 'myth,' of Marxism may be summarized thus: Uncontrolled 'capitalism,' combined with the astonishing development of technology which Marx rightly foresaw, is bound to result in the piling up of wealth in the pockets of employers, leaving the workers no money to satisfy the demands without which the machines will not be able to continue, once the virgin markets of the world have been exploited: hence widespread misery, leading to revolution. The workers will take control of the machines, divide the profits among themselves, and so have money to buy the products of the machines and keep them working, with ever-increasing efficiency and speed. Hence universal leisure and contentment. This common ownership of the means of production — which, as Lenin once agreed, might just as well be called 'State-capitalist monopoly'[1] — will result in prosperity for all, a Kingdom of Heaven upon earth. One might have thought that all would desire it: but the greed of the 'capitalists' is such (thanks to the system rather than to elemental human nature, which is viewed through spectacles as rosy as Rousseau's) that they will do all they can by the use of influence, money and religion to thwart it. Hence the workers must use force, establish a dictatorship of the proletariate — the phrase occurs occasionally in Marx and Engels, and has become an *idée fixe* with Lenin — and silence all opposition. But after that phase, when the possibilities of selfish exploitation have been wiped out, the 'State,' which under the bourgeoisie was simply the instrument of class-coercion, will be unnecessary and will 'wither away': the dialectical process which Marx traced one stage further than Hegel will then miraculously cease — and everybody (just think of it!) will live happily ever after.

Up to the Dictatorship of the Proletariate stage the theory has, in one-sixth of the world, proved astonishingly correct.

[1] Lenin, *The Threatening Catastrophe*, p. 37; cited by F. A. Voigt, *Unto Caesar*, p. 69.

Hence its great, though diminishing, prestige. And the more people that come to believe it, the more it will be proved true. But the great question is, will it ever get any further than this stage? Although there are elements of real democracy in Russia, there are no signs of the lessening of the power of the Ogpu; and Trotsky, the right-hand man of Lenin and the unwavering apostle of the original immediate 'world revolution'—a policy which would almost certainly have been disastrous—has only just been 'liquidated.' The unprovoked attack on Finland and the swallowing up of Bessarabia, the Baltic States, and Russian Poland, however much less unjustifiable than the Nazi rape of Western Europe, remind one of the methods of Peter the Great. Russia's rapidly expanding industrial system is controlled by the party, whose membership is but a fraction of the total population: and however little they may get in terms of cash,[2] they receive in full measure what matters far more to the ambitious young communist, namely, social power. One wonders whether the State is not *still* the 'instrument of class-coercion' (coercion partly by means of propaganda and a heresy-hunting that outdoes the Inquisition), and how long it will remain so. So far from withering away, the Russian State—which means, for practical purposes, the Dictatorship—has greater coercive powers than ever. In the words of Berdyaev, who himself grew up as a Russian Marxist, and who still writes as an enemy of capitalist exploitation, we see in Russia 'an extreme étatism which holds in an iron grip the life of a huge country, and that unfortunately in entire accord with the ancient tradition of Russian statecraft.'[3] 'Stalinism . . . is being imperceptibly transformed into a peculiar sort of Russian fascism. All the characteristics of fascism are inherent in it, a totalitarian state, state-capitalism, nationalism, "leaderism," and a militarized youth.'[3A] And State-capitalism is 'capable of exploitation no less than private capitalism.'[4] And although the masses are sedulously taught by every device of propaganda to believe that the ruling party wills only what they themselves desire, the very ease with which this is done gives the party a power which is most danger-

[2] It is credibly reported that the incomes of the best- and worst-paid civil servants vary more in Russia than in England.

[3] *The Origin of Russian Communism* (Bles, 1937), p. 172.

[3A] *op. cit.*, p. 177.

[4] *op. cit.*, p. 153.

ous. 'Power corrupts,' said Lord Acton, 'and absolute power corrupts absolutely.' And in Russia, even though elections may change some individuals, and discussions (strictly limited) may alter details of policy, the main dogmas are dictated from above. However much the Church, purified and regenerated by persecution, may survive to enrich men's private lives, in public affairs the salutary tension between Church and State has been completely sacrificed.

But in the other five-sixths of the world the materialistic dialectic has not yet even reached the stage of the dictatorship of the proletariate.[5] And in Germany—which the Communist Manifesto of 1848, and again Lenin in 1918,[6] declared to be ripe for Communist Revolution—it is the despised bourgeoisie which has produced a revolution of its own! (It is an open question how far this will not be the inevitable reaction to a strong Communist challenge, in all countries, unlike Tsarist Russia and Mexico, where there is a strong bourgeoisie: certainly that seems to be true also of Franco's Spain and Petain's France.) In the words of F. A. Voigt:

> 'In Germany the most powerful Communist Party outside Russia has collapsed like a paper bag (without even a bang) at the first onset. . . . The "little man" has made himself absolute master of the greatest military power that ever existed. . . . He has compelled the Marxists to accept every compromise which, only a short while before, they denounced as treacherous and contemptible, compromise with the "bourgeoisie," . . . with Social Democrats, . . . with "the robber League of Nations." . . . He has compelled Stalin to hold out bouquets to the once so abominated British Empire.'[7]

And now, with the eclipse of the League and of the Popular Front, Hitler has compelled Stalin to make a pact of non-aggression with himself, till then supposed to be the greatest enemy of all.

Bolshevism and Nazism are still rivals, but red blood grown stale is apt to turn brown, and there are many points of resemblance. Both are largely totalitarian and fascist; both are messianic religions. There is a high degree of socialism in both, for although in Germany the means of production are still

[5] Even in Russia it is more a dictatorship of the party purporting to represent the proletariate than of the proletariate itself.

[6] *Unto Caesar*, p. 107.

[7] *op. cit.*, pp. 34-35.

largely under private ownership, they are controlled collectively and most of the profits soon find their way to the State coffers. Big capitalists like Thyssen, who supported Nazism as an alternative to social-democracy, soon found the error of their ways. And although the standard of living of nearly all Germans has lowered since Hitler's coming to power, six million unemployed have been given work and there is far less in the way of class-distinctions.[8] The limited, though often great, economic sacrifices have been gladly made by many to whom the national self-glorification of *Mein Kampf* has come as an inexpressible psychological relief from their feelings of humiliation and frustration. In the words of J. C. Hardwick,[9] 'It made the little man feel big, the coward brave, the repressed liberated.' It has given them 'a happiness so great as to be almost unendurable, a happiness that shines in the face, that makes the body restless for action, that infuses immense resourcefulness and courage.'[10] But the many who never felt this, or who could not feel it for long, have to make some pretence that they do. For the pressure of the Gestapo is as strong as that of the Ogpu, and the terror ingeminated by the concentration camps and memories of the 'night of the long knives' of June 30th, 1934, has to be experienced to be believed. It is not safe to confront a stranger with a glum face: true feelings about the terror can only be revealed to trusted friends. A kindlier but no less effective pressure is exerted by the perpetual propaganda and the suppression of public opposition. Children in particular form an unresisting target for the shafts of Dr. Goebbels. The German schools no longer attempt to train minds to sift evidence objectively, to discover the truth by patient enquiry: they train them to become

[8] For Hitler's 'sense of class' and hostility to class-privilege see F. A. Voigt, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70. On p. 285 Voigt writes: 'There must be more wealthy individuals in Germany than in Russia. But it would seem that there is a greater inequality between the Communist bureaucracy . . . and the Russian people as a whole than between the National Socialist bureaucracy and the German people as a whole.'

[9] *Totalitarianism*, p. 40.

[10] F. A. Voigt, *op. cit.*, p. 114. He emphasizes that Marx and Lenin gave this same 'happiness of complete abandonment to clear certainty and absolute truth, to the indubitable assurance of final victory, to the delicious and uplifting vision of spiritual and temporal power over all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them.'

the unquestioning absorbers of the poisonous lies and half-truths disseminated by the party. The pupils are

> 'intellectually fed as a French farmer fattens his geese for *foie gras*. . . . They are nothing but vessels for State propaganda, and the copious daught allows no time for thought, even if they had not lost the habit.' [11]

The prostitution of the universities is, if anything, worse than that of the schools. (And here Russia, where the *lower* schools seem to have improved, is about as bad as Germany.) The wholesale expulsion of famous scholars and scientists from both countries is well known. History is shamelessly distorted to fit the *Weltanschauung* of the party. Both Nazis and Marxists claim to have 'science' on their side: but while Bolshevism is rationalist up to a point, both are intolerant towards other theories, except in the sphere of the exact sciences, and the pseudo-science of Nazism is highly irrational. Especially is this true of their attitude towards race, which is to the Nazi what class is to the Marxists. According to *Mein Kampf*, 'original sin' (!) is due to racial mixture, the pollution of the sinless 'Ayran race' by the poisons of the Jews.

There is, of course, no such thing as an Aryan race: even Aryan culture has much in common with Semitic and other cultures. But 'the Jews' as a source of evil are as necessary to Hitler as the capitalist to the Marxist. Indeed, the two central antipathies overlap, because anti-capitalism is certainly one of the many occasions of anti-Semitism — the Jew being taken as the typical money-lender or international financier.[12] But the Jew of caricature, with his dark, oozy locks, bloated cheeks, hooked nose and fleshy lips, is more than a symbol of what the Nazi hates. He is often a symbol, or rather a 'projection,' of what the Nazi *is*. There is, for instance, a remarkable similarity between the revolutionary plans attributed to Jews in that anti-Semitic forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Sion*, and the

[11] *cf.* S. H. Roberts, *The House that Hitler Built*, pp. 207-8.

[12] P. Drucker in *The End of Economic Man*, pp. 187-201, points out that Germany had remained so long an unindustrialized military aristocracy that the rise of the bureaucracy did not occur until the epoch of Jewish emancipation. Thus the Jews entered the business world on an equality with the non-Jews, and there was indeed a large proportion of Jews and half-Jews in the class which found itself at the head of things in 1918, and under whose rule came the inflation, the great slump, and the unemployment of six millions.

deeds of the Nazis. According to the Protocols, 'right is might by the laws of nature, . . . the blind mass of the people cannot be without a leader for one day,' and, when authority fails, a 'new power replaces the old which has been disintegrated by liberalism.' For 'the masses only obey a strong power that is quite independent of them, a power to which they can look up in blind confidence — they must see in him [the ruler] the embodiment of firm will and inflexible might.'[13] This is quite unlike the attitude adopted by the Jews in Germany, but almost exactly expresses the outlook of Hitler.

But we must pass on to what most concerns us, the attitude of Bolshevists and Nazis towards Christianity. Unfortunately 'Christianity' is a term which covers many sins as well as virtues, and there have been 'Christians' who have thought it possible to co-operate whole-heartedly with these régimes. Thus there was the 'Living Church' in Russia—corresponding to Conrad Noel's *Catholic Crusade* in England — whose outlook is reflected in the writings of Julius Hecker. But we hear little of that now. Its Nazi counterpart, the so-called 'German Christians,'[14] those Nazi wolves in Christian sheep's clothing, are far more numerous and active, partly because of the unhappily strong Lutheran tradition of being in subjection to *whatever* powers that be. But even so, the bulk of the Nazis who still call themselves Christians — 'positive Christians,' in contrast to the 'negative Christianity' of the Churches—have at least the honesty to keep outside the traditional Churches. And most of the Nazis seem now to be as openly anti-Christian as the Bolsheviks. Both of them reject the claims of absolute ethical values: for them, good is what promotes the cause of the party, evil what hinders it.[15] The fanatical hatred and violence which they foster can never be accepted by Christians, however much they may have to compromise, within limits, with the ways of the world, to be stern as well as loving, and even to fight—when there is no other

[13] Cited by F. A. Voigt, *op. cit.*, pp. 126-7. He refers to A. Stein, *Adolf Hitler, Schüler der Weisen von Zion.*

[14] See A. Kolnai, *The War against the West*, pp. 248-263, who describes some of the few Catholic and of the many Protestant prototypes of these Teutonic Iscariots. Also A. Duncan-Jones, *The Struggle for Religious Freedom in Germany*, pp. 32-36, etc.; and A. Frey, *Cross and Swastika*, pp. 112-136.

[15] See F. A. Voigt, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

way. True Christianity, although it has points in common with the new creeds, and although we must admit there is more self-sacrifice, faith, hope, and joy in the lives of many totalitarians than of most nominal Christians, must and can resist them. There are many indications of new life in the persecuted Church of Russia; while Cardinal Faulhaber and the Confessional Church have stood up to the Nazis when practically all other open opposition (and how much one might have expected!) has been swept away.

But we must observe that these true Christians in Russia and Germany are going right against the Erastian traditions dominant in their Churches. And we must enquire, even of them, whether they have the power not only to subsist in the catacombs, but to come out and give the world, which has given up its extravagant hopes of private and now of State capitalism, a social and economic system, some synthesis of the two capitalisms, which will at least save it from continuous warfare. And in constructing such a system there may well be elements in Bolshevism and Nazism which we must honour—especially the enthusiasm and readiness to make sacrifices for the cause, and the determination to control economic forces for moral ends.

There is still much truth in what Berdyaev wrote some ten years ago:

> 'The only thing to pit against integral Communism . . . is integral Christianity: not rhetorical, tattered, decadent Christianity, but renascent Christianity working out its eternal truth towards consistent life, consistent culture, consistent social justice. The whole future of Christian societies depends on whether Christians decisively leave off supporting capitalism and social injustice: on whether the Christian world sets to work, in the name of God and of Christ, to put into practice that justice which the Communists are now introducing in the name of a godless collectivity. . . . The Christians of our *bourgeois* epoch of history have created most painful associations in the minds of the working-class; they have not done Christ's mission to the souls of the oppressed. . . . The situation of the Christian world face to face with Communism is not merely that of the depository of eternal and absolute truth, but also that of a guilty world which has not practised the truth it possesses but rather turned traitor to it. Of course Christian truth is much harder to carry out than Communist truth. . . . And if Christians carry out less and not more, Christian truth itself is not to blame. The historical tragedy is that genuine Christianity can, apparently, never obtain complete mastery and power in this world. Mastery and power have only belonged to pseudo-Christianity. The world turns away from integral Christianity.

> Meanwhile Christianity is the only basis on which a solution can be found for the painful conflict between personality and society. . . . On a basis of irreligion, either aristocracy oppresses and exploits democracy, or democracy vulgarizes the souls of men, lowers the cultural level, and destroys nobility.
>
> If there is not a Christian revival in the world, a rebirth not only among the *élite* but also among the great masses of the people, atheistic communism will conquer over the whole earth. . . . There is no reason to be very optimistic. . . . The future belongs, whatever happens, to the working classes. . . . And all depends on what their spirit will be. In whose name will they renew life, in the name of God and of Christ, of the spiritual principle in man, or in the name of anti-Christ, of divinised matter, in the name of a divinised human collectivity in which the very image of man disappears, and the human soul expires? The Russian people have stated the problem before the whole world.' [17]

We suggested earlier that, with human nature as it is, complete socialism and complete democracy are incompatible. But in so far as men become really Christians, so far can we have a socialism which will not be tyrannical, and a democracy that is not mere licence. Men living under such a system would find it easier to become better Christians. The process might move forward in a 'virtuous circle' of man improving system and system man. But it is a blind Utopianism to suppose that anything like this will happen by the removal of the bourgeoisie, or of the Jews or democrats. And with the full fury of Mars let loose, the question is whether we shall not move rather in the opposite direction, and get stranded on one of the horns of the dilemma which will then loom forth. We should then have to choose either to smash the machines whose rapid development has produced such unrest and insecurity, and live in poor and largely autarkic, but libertarian, Erewhons; or else accept the collective control which the machines demand,[18] and lose our freedom. The choice will be bitter. God grant we may escape it.

[17] *The Russian Revolution*, pp. 92-95.

[18] For proof of this, see J. Middleton Murry, *Europe in Travail*, pp. 20-21.

INDIFFERENTISM AND PESSIMISM

By J. C. Hardwick, M.A., B.Sc.

A DISTINCTION must be drawn between indifferentism and pessimism, and of the two pessimism is the less unworthy of a man. The pessimist does believe in the existence of values, in the distinction between good and evil. The trouble with him is that he does not believe the good can win. He is on the side of the angels, but holds it to be the losing side. As for the indifferentist, good and evil for him are all one; there may be a battle between them, but as to which of the two will win he neither knows nor cares; it is no concern of his. Thus he evades the fight, though the pessimist may actually join in it. *Victrix causa deis placuit, sed victa Catoni.* He knows he will be defeated, but he does not mind, as it is better to go down with the right than to win with the wrong. There is a defeat, he holds, that is greater than victory. He is prepared to go out with a forlorn hope, knowing he will never come back. But the indifferentist shrugs his shoulders, and keeps his hands in his pockets; he will not be drawn in.

It is worth while to examine the psychology of the indifferentist; there must be something unnatural about it, for the ordinary normal man is prepared to take sides, and to choose his side according to his lights. He likes to feel that there is some meaning in life, that it presents challenges which have to be taken up. The root of the indifferentist's trouble is, probably, lack of vitality, and this makes him anxious to stand outside life, to look on rather than take part, to be a spectator not a combatant; not to be too much involved in the business, but to live on the principle of limited liability. May this not be the reason why there is a tendency for the intellectual to become an indifferentist? If the intellect has been cultivated at the cost of personal vitality, indifferentism will result; and though it may not be openly expressed, it will be present and operative. The man, for all his mental ability, will not have the vigour to take an active part in the moulding of the present and the future. He will be a negligible factor in affairs, though he may cherish many fine ideas. In many cases he will actually profess his indifferent-

ism, and even make a boast of it; for this will give him a feeling of superiority over the strugglers which will cover over his fundamental consciousness of inferiority to them.

But why should the intellectual be lacking in vitality? There is nothing incompatible between intellect and vitality; indeed, a strong intellect ought to be evidence of vigorous vitality. And what is more, vigorous vitality cannot dispense with intellect; if it does, it wastes itself in futilities or simply explodes. There would appear to be two reasons why the intellectual becomes anaemic and hamstrung. The first is that just because intellect is analytical and critical, it is possible for the results of its activity to be merely negative and destructive, instead of being positive and constructive. Life is positive, constructive and creative, and the intellect, its instrument, ought to be so too. When it fails to be so, it ceases to be an instrument of life and becomes an instrument of death, dissecting rather than putting together, and, if it creates at all, creating only abstractions, not concrete realities. The second reason for the intellectual's lack of vitality and consequent indifferentism is that he is isolated and 'cut off' in one or both of two ways. The first is when his thinking is academic and 'theoretical' only and divorced from action. Thinking can only remain healthy when it is united to action and goes hand in hand with it. Thought is an instrument for enabling the human organism to cope with its environment, material and immaterial. When the intellect ceases to be an instrument of action, it creates unreal problems, loses touch with reality, and ends by questioning everything, including itself, so that the result is scepticism and indifferentism. As for the second way of being 'cut off,' it is almost universal among intellectuals to-day; they are cut off not only from life (being academic and abstract), but are also cut off from *the sources of life*.

To put it simply, the modern intellectual has no religion; he lives on his own personal, individual resources, and so he suffers from vital starvation. He may claim to have a religion, but his religion is primarily an intellectual theory, thin and abstract, a web he has spun out of his own mind. It may be erudite, fine-spun, idealistic, but it is divorced from present reality. It resembles pressed flowers, *pot pourri*; or a delicate lace fabric wrought with infinite labour for no particular purpose. It is not a channel through which fresh floods of vitality can pour. Reli-

gion is nothing if it is not a source of energy and life; not a mere means of stimulating energy which is already present, but of bringing in energy from an outside source. If there exists a fountain of life and energy which can be tapped, then there is something in religion; it is a means of turning on the tap. If there is no such fountain of life, then religion is a sham and a deception. Religion is not, as the intellectuals allege, a form of culture, for culture is a flower, while religion is a root—or rather, that black, deep soil down into which the root gropes in order to find nourishment. Religion is the technique of drawing nourishment from the soil; and modern intellectual man has largely lost that technique.

According to the view here put forward, then, indifferentism, and to a lesser degree pessimism too, is due to a shortage of vitality; and this shortage is due to (1) intellectual activity divorced from action, and to (2) a cutting of the tap-root of vitality, *i.e.* the abadonment of religion and the loss of religious techniques. Thus there is nothing 'superior' about either indifferentism or pessimism, even though they may be characteristic of intellectuals. On the contrary, they are morbid signs, proving that the grip on life has been lost. Both alike proceed from a pathological denial and refusal of life. They are symptoms of a failure of nerve, and the society that displays them is in decay.

Between Christianity on the one hand and indifferentism and pessimism on the other, there is nothing in common. The two are incompatible. It may not be possible to confine Christianity within the limits of a formal definition (only dogmatists try to), but the spirit of it is plain enough, and may be discerned better than anywhere else in the characters of the Bible—not excluding those of the Old Testament. Elijah, David, Jeremiah, Amos, Judas Maccabaeus, John the Baptist, St. Paul, the authors of *Hebrews* and *Revelation* were not only not indifferentists, but were clearly quite incapable of comprehending such a state of mind, or even imagining it. Jeremiah, on a short view, might appear a pessimist, since he held that Jerusalem was done for. But pessimism about the prospects of something that is already rotten and decadent is not pessimism, but an optimistic realization that the universe is not a chaos but a cosmos, and that things work out according to a fundamental law which is at bottom

rational and moral. Jeremiah would not have understood the view-point of that genuine pessimist Thomas Hardy, who believed that the universe was meaningless, as did the author of *Ecclesiastes*. Jeremiah held that life had a meaning, and a pretty plain one too for a man that had eyes to see — and even those who had their eyes shut would have them rudely opened before long. All the more striking characters in the Bible were convinced that issues far more crucial than human beings had any idea of were involved in human life — issues that were not merely human, but which involved heavenly and infernal powers. Nor was this conviction a theoretical one only in their case; they were prepared to fling themselves into the struggle; Elijah was no more afraid of Ahab than John the Baptist was of Herod. And they were all the more determined because the idea of the possibility of ultimate defeat never crossed their minds. 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' — St. Paul's challenging words express the attitude of all these indomitable souls for whom indifferentism and pessimism were not only impossible but unimaginable. Their certainty of the ultimate issue amounted to fatalism; and it is a very curious fact that those who have turned the world upside down have generally been fatalists. Mahomet, Calvin, Marx were all predestinarians. Even Napoleon believed in his own star. One might have supposed that fatalism would lead to indifferentism, for if the issue is already decided why trouble to take action? But that is not the way things work out. The man who believes himself to be an instrument of destiny, or the prophet of an inevitable law of development (as Mahomet and Marx did), displays an energy which far exceeds that of any mere mortal who regards himself as 'free.' Who wants to be 'free'? To be free is to be alone, to be forced to live on one's own resources and to play the game off one's own bat; whereas to be a chosen instrument to help work out a predestined plan which is bound to succeed, that is life indeed! You make the best of both worlds, for you not only get the fun of the fight, but the ecstasy of victory into the bargain; and while you fight you have no doubts or hesitations. The pessimists and indifferentists make a poor show compared with the sons of thunder, the children of destiny! They may be 'free,' but they are not very effective.

But perhaps enough has been said from the general standpoint, and we may now pass on to consider the actual situation as it faces us. Not even the most disillusioned of intellectuals can view that situation with indifference, if only because detachment is impossible for a man whose car has got into a bad skid. As for pessimism, that is certainly possible, but it is not likely to do any good; on the contrary, to be defeatist invites defeat, and even makes it certain. The truth is that indifferentism and pessimism are equally out of place to-day. If we are indifferentist and pessimist, there are people who are neither; and it is they, and not we, who in that case will come out uppermost. Recent catastrophic events have demonstrated how men with faith can conquer men who have none.

Optimist liberals of a generation ago such as J. M. Guyau, believing that religion belonged to the childhood of the race and that its day was over, spoke of the 'non-religion of the future,' little knowing what the future held in its bosom. It was no non-religion that was to come into existence, but a new religion, complete with dogmas, a new ethic, a new economic system, ritual, a Holy Office, prophets, priests, festivals, hymns, processions; a religion fully equipped, and one that could stimulate zeal, self-sacrifice, fanaticism. One that could capture a whole people and drive them on to world conquest or self-destruction. And what would have surprised Guyau most would be the fact that the nation which had thus bound itself hand and foot to the new religion was perhaps the most efficiently educated in Europe, and equipped with all the latest developments of scientific technique.

In the face of a development of this sort, pessimism may be in order, but indifferentism is quite out of place. Indeed, pessimism, though excusable in theory, hands victory over to the adversary and hauls down the flag. And as for indifferentism, it is clear that detachment is no longer possible, if only because if the ship is torpedoed everyone goes down with her. You may not be interested in the ship and her course, but your fate is indissolubly bound up with hers.

But it is one thing to condemn indifferentism and pessimism and to see how fatal they are; it is a very different thing to know how to get rid of these two diseases of the soul, or rather, of

these twin symptoms of one fatal disease. How are they to be exorcised? Fundamentally, both spring from a lack of faith in existence, in life. It was said above that they sprang from lack of vitality; but the two are the same, for faith is the spiritual accompaniment of a condition of personal vitality. As a matter of fact, at the present moment the stimulus of danger has revived vitality, and with it faith. Indifferentism has for the moment disappeared, and pessimism is in abeyance. This suddenly renewed vitality has produced strong reactions in the way of effort and determination to repel the danger. But when the danger has once been repelled, the suddenly stimulated vitality, and the efforts it produced, will die down again, and indifferentism and pessimism will reassert their sway. This is what happened twenty years ago. Can it be prevented from happening again?

It all depends upon whether the social organism can retain the vitality which danger stimulated. But if one set of conditions (danger) has stimulated vitality, can a changed set of conditions (safety) preserve that vitality? Surely, if the gas is turned off, the kettle will go off the boil. How can it be kept boiling when the gas is turned off? Obviously the only thing to do is to find some alternative source of heat—electricity perhaps. In other words, when the war is over, what will be the substitute for war and its dangers? Fortunately or unfortunately, dangers are never absent, but the trouble is we do not accept their challenge, and therefore miss their stimulus. Post-war dangers, less spectacular perhaps, but not less serious than those of war, will face society. Will society have the vitality to face them and find a way of overcoming them? That is the question. Or will society be too tired, or too afraid of upsetting the old ways?

The view taken about the rôle of religion in the period which lies ahead depends on whether religion is to be regarded as a product of vitality or a source of it, whether it is a flower or a root. If the former, then the fate of religion depends on whether we are in for a time of decay or of renaissance, and will itself affect the future only secondarily as a form of culture. But if the latter, if religion is root or soil rather than flower, then the alternatives, decay or renaissance, depend wholly upon religion, which alone can supply the energy to defeat decay and arouse

renaissance. This is the view taken in the present article, though it may be admitted that there is little evidence that our traditional religion has this power. Traditional religion as at present embodied in religious institutions is obviously just a form of culture, and rather a colourless and unenterprising form; hardly a source of power. On the other hand, the new religions, for all their crudity and savagery, do appear to be sources of energy and life. The problem is to make the Christian religion a source of vitality and power again, as it undoubtedly was in its peak periods.

Many people think it can be done by devising a social system consistent with and inspired by Christian ethical ideals, by putting it into force and by waiting for results. But this programme ignores the fact that social systems have to be run by human beings; and unless you can provide a caste of super-men to run it, the new system will suffer from all the failings inherent in human nature. You will only liquidate one set of tyrants to replace it by another, as has been done in Russia. And a new set of tyrants is likely to be more efficient than an old one. A time-honoured tyranny is always the best; it presses less hardly on the shoulders.

But how is it possible that religion should once more become, as it certainly once was, a source of power so that the vitality generated by danger can be kept in existence instead of being suffered to lapse, in accordance with that law of gravitation, or rather, of the degradation of energy, which appears to operate in the spiritual sphere? If when the stimulus of danger is over, vitality evaporates, our last state will be worse than our first, because our indifferentism will have been aggravated by sheer exhaustion of spirit.

In the present confusion everyone is entitled to an opinion, and that of the writer is that religion can only become a power again on one condition, *i.e.* that it should concentrate on practice rather than on theory, that is to say, on technique rather than on creeds. By the practice of religion is not meant philanthropy, morality, or good conduct; but simply religious activities such as prayer, meditation, contemplation. The techniques of these activities need revising and bringing up to date in the light of psychological knowledge and of the accumulated experience

both of the Christian world and the Orient. And we need not only a new manual of personal re-education like Loyola's Spiritual Exercises brought up to date, but also a new Society of Jesus to practice the Exercises and to instruct others in their use. It is important to recognize that the correct and logical order in religion is, first, devotional practice based on efficient techniques; second, religious experience arising from the use of the techniques; third, beliefs based upon that experience and verifiable by it; and fourth, personal and social morality issuing from it. At present tremendous efforts are made to preserve beliefs which for the majority of people have no basis in personal experience, and in the case of some of the beliefs, no possible basis of that sort. In every sphere but that of religion accepted beliefs can be subjected to the test of personal experience; and it is hard to see why the case of religion should be exceptional.

Such a view of religion, as a kind of power-generator, will not appeal to those who have been accustomed to regard it primarily as a form of culture — a pleasing, delicate flower with a fruit that is eatable and even nourishing. But the question really is whether (as was said above) religion is a root or a flower, whether it generates a civilization or whether a civilization generates it. The view taken by the writer is that religion is the root from which civilization and all culture springs. Our historic European civilization is in a bad way because the root of its vitality, the Christian religion, has, for reasons which I cannot deal with here, ceased to function. Hence indifferentism and pessimism, which hasten the collapse. Hence also the invention of new State religions, which for a season stimulate vitality but are such as to lead in the end to convulsions and ruin.

Thus indifferentism and pessimism, which are symptoms ot disease, of a kind of spiritual anaemia, will not be banished by denunciations, nor by exhortations to the public to be keen and full of enthusiasm. They will be banished only by a clearing out of the blocks in the channel to the sources of vitality. The sources exist, but the well is choked with sand. The public would be keen enough if the flow could be started. In fact the results would be such as to astonish, and perhaps dismay, the more conservative amongst us.

THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION IN EDUCATION

By Guy Kendall, M.A.

IT might be contended that in Europe, from the beginning of the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century, education and Christian education were synonymous; and for the most part it is true. The contrast between the religious and the secular schools and universities first appeared in the days of the early Church; it threatened to reappear at the Renaissance, and it became acute after the French Revolution. To-day the secular side of education is almost extruding the religious altogether; and for reasons of space it will be necessary in this paper to confine the discussion mainly to the present problem how to maintain the tradition of Christian education against the menace of complete secularism.

In the beginning the question was whether Christianity could admit culture. In the earliest years of the Christian Church culture for most meant Paganism, and as such was to be avoided as a work of the devil. But pagan culture included philosophy, and the Church from the beginning found it necessary to call in the aid of Greek philosophy for the purpose of elucidating its own dogmas and finding for them a basis in reason. That was the only way in which the challenge of philosophy could be met. The Catechetical School of Alexandria not only welcomed the support of Greek philosophy, especially the essentially religious mind of Plato, but it held that the highest form of Christian education necessarily included philosophical study. Without it, it was only possible to attain to the 'elements of the beginning of the oracles of God' (*Heb.* v, 12). In other words, religion of the higher order required a basis of general culture. Clement of Alexandria regarded philosophy in the Greek world as a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ. Jerome, who in his earlier years had denounced poetry, philosophy, and rhetoric as 'mere food of demons,' later on did not scruple to teach the great classical authors to the boys of Bethlehem. Augustine attached much im-

portance to literary technique—'*Profani si quid bene dixerunt, non asperandum.*'[1] The truth is that, in its relation to cultivated paganism, Christianity could have had no chance if it had exalted mere ignorance, refused to talk the language of learning, and scorned the claims of beauty and culture as the works of the devil. Possibly St. Paul would not have been so uncompromising in his rejection at Corinth of 'the wisdom of this world' if he had not been convinced of the shortness of the time. A long-time policy would perhaps have been conceived in a broader perspective.

Throughout the Middle Ages the dissociation of religious and secular education was inconceivable. With the Renaissance it became a possibility. The idea of a double standard of truth had troubled Aquinas. There was the truth of revealed religion which must be believed, and the truth of reason and philosophy which could not be denied. Even after the revival of learning was in full swing, says Dr. Laurie,[2] 'doctors had, not seldom, one opinion for philosophic schools, another for the Church and the world outside.' In Italy at one time reason seemed likely to cut loose from religion, and a semi-official paganism flourished for a time. But in Northern Europe the New Learning was either absorbed by the Reformed Faith or made subservient to it. In England the balanced judgment of More and Colet never wholly lost its influence. It is significant that Colet, in giving to the Mercers' Company the charge of his new foundation of St. Paul's School, desired that the actual Governors should be married men not ecclesiastics. No one could have desired more than he that it should be a truly Christian foundation; but no doubt he felt that the joint interests of religious training and secular education would in this way be better secured. He feared the untempered control of the ecclesiastic. As Dr. Adamson writes in the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, Colet held

> 'that such things as Hierarchy and Sacraments are not to be prized because they are in themselves the active sources and centres of mysterious powers, but because they faintly symbolize the mysterious forces through which God works silently for the salvation of His people.'[3]

[1] Dill, *Roman Society in the last century of Christianity*, pp. 321-324.
[2] *Educational Opinion from the Renaissance*, by S. S. Laurie, p. 4.
[3] C.H.E.L., Vol. III, p. 10.

And perhaps the sequel showed him to be right, for the control which the Church exercised over education in the Middle Ages was exercised perhaps even more assiduously by the State Church of Henry VIII and Elizabeth.

'Medieval schoolmasters were servants of the Church,' says Dr. Wood,[4] and they were either in priest's or in minor orders. Permission to teach was given by licence of the Ordinary, and this requirement still held after the Reformation. In fact, it became still more essential as a means of discovering recusant Catholics and Puritans. In Archbishop Grindal's injunctions to the Province of York, 1571, we read that the schoolmaster shall teach his scholars

> 'the Catechism in Latin and such sentences of Scripture (besides chaste profane authors) as shall be most meet to move them to the love and due reverence of God's true religion now truly set forth by the Queen's Majesty,'

—surely the extreme limit of Erastian language. 'Schools,' to quote the same author again, 'were so much a part of the ecclesiastical system that both the teaching of religion and religious observances formed an integral part of the curriculum.' The extremer Protestants in England were suspicious of secular, *i.e.* classical studies, because of the immoralities to be found in the classical authors. Thomas Becon, chaplain to Cranmer in the reign of Edward VI, has much to say about the school curriculum, which he would base 'on the conception that the main function of a school was to lead children to know God.' The classical authors, 'without the knowledge of Christ crucified,' he thought to be ignorant and blind men. Despite these puritan views the classics, by means of discreet selections and omissions, lived in harmony with the Bible in the school curriculum. But the primacy of religious training in the school was, down to the last century, acknowledged everywhere, though in the decline of religious interest in the eighteenth century it became less effective.

It is one of the paradoxes of the eighteenth century that, regarding itself as the age of enlightenment, it stands out as the period when popular education was most neglected. But it is significant that the two movements towards the education of the poor which stand out in that century were both strongly religious

[4] *The Reformation and English Education,* by Dr. Norman Wood, p. 51.

in character—the Charity Schools and the Sunday Schools. In fact, it is not too much to say that the Sunday schools would never have been tolerated had their first object not been to teach the poor to read the Bible. Any other accomplishments which they might acquire, except the purely utilitarian arts of sewing and the like, were regarded as dangerous ways of encouraging the poor to rise above their proper station.[5] It is strange, then, that after an interval of 150 years the position should have been completely reversed, so that religious teaching seems to be fighting a losing battle for its existence, while it is generally recognized that every boy and girl in the kingdom should be provided with all the secular instruction that he is capable of receiving. In England, it is true, there has never been a marked antagonism between secularism and clericalism, such as has been only too common on the Continent. We adopted, as usual, a compromise in the dual system of what are now known as 'provided' and 'non-provided' schools. But the dual system is, as Bishop Henson has shown, fast disappearing, and before long it is almost certain that the 'provided' elementary schools will become universal.

Moreover, religious instruction in the home is fast perishing, if it has not already perished. This is due partly perhaps to indifference and indolence, but there is certainly another cause —the bewilderment of parents as to the apparently conflicting claims of dogma and modern learning. They do not wish to teach what they do not feel sure to be true; but they are uncertain how much they can take for assured truth. Yet it was to the homes that the Reformers looked to carry on the bulk of religious instruction. From the Royal Injunctions of 1536 Dr. Wood infers that

'it was felt necessary to order the clergy to teach parents [from the

[5] One honourable exception to the prevailing view is that of Bishop Butler, who in a sermon preached in aid of Charity Schools said that 'Children have as much right to some proper education as to have their lives preserved, and . . . when this is not given them by their parents, the care of it devolves on all persons.' In this he was following the lead of Cranmer, who had insisted that where talent was found among the poor it should be given its opportunity: 'If the gentleman's son be apt, let him be admitted; if not, let the poor man's child that is apt, enter his room.'

Both these passages are quoted by Bishop Henson in *The Church of England*, pp. 187-191.

> pulpit]. . . . Having learned it themselves, the parents were then to impart their learning to their children.'

In Scotland this was, up till recent years at any rate, the foundation of Christian teaching, and the same may have been true of the upper and middle classes in England, though hardly of the poor. In answering the common objection to the Sunday schools that they destroyed the custom of home instruction and family church-going, Bishop Jackson wrote in 1870:

> 'As a matter of fact, parents for the most part cannot, or do not, teach their children at home on Sunday, nor take them with them to the house of God.'

Nor was that a new feature of the nineteenth century. The Sunday schools came into being in the eighteenth century mainly to supply these defects of the home.

The history of the coming of State education in England, from the time of the Utilitarians and the first Parliamentary grant to the present day, is well known, and there is not space to summarize it here. But there are some points which it is well to remember about Cowper-Templeism, the name commonly given to the compromise effected by the Act of 1870. The Cowper-Temple clause was negative in form, simply excluding from the provided schools (as they are now called) any catechism or religious formulary distinctive of a particular denomination. Within that limit the religious instruction given was at the option of each School Board. But what for the most part was given was founded on the practice of Lancaster, the Quaker schoolmaster, the virtual founder of the British type of school. Lancaster's teaching was quite positive and dogmatic, 'on the lines of doctrine common to all the orthodox denominations.' But under the Cowper-Temple clause Bible reading 'without comment' could be, and sometimes was, the only form of religious instruction. It is an expedient which in these times seems particularly undesirable, especially where the Old Testament is concerned.[6] The Spens Committee on post-primary education wisely recommended that, where Biblical instruction is to be given, those responsible for giving it should have had some special training to fit them for the task.

[6] It is curious that Lord Brougham's abortive Bill of 1820 provided that teachers should be members of the Church of England, but the only religious teaching was to be Bible reading without comment.

I want to devote the rest of my space to asking, what is to be the solution of the problem of religious education in England? Bishop Henson finds an easy and straightforward solution:

> 'If instruction in Christian faith and morals were made compulsory (subject to a conscience clause) in all schools; if the State limited its direct concern to the secular subjects, and entrusted the religious instruction to the local education authorities, there is little reason for doubting that in a very short time the problem would be happily solved.'

I am not sure that the Bishop's optimism is wholly justified. It is true that some local authorities have gone a long way towards finding a satisfactory, though perhaps only partial, solution by issuing excellent 'agreed syllabuses' of Bible instruction, such as would serve well for Church and Chapel to build on alike. But it may be that we have gone too far already in leaving the initiative in matters of education to local authorities. Some are good; some slack or reactionary. If the matter of religious education is of vital importance (and circumstances have at last awakened the public to the fact that Christian principles *are* of vital importance) then the State cannot leave the responsibility to the local education authorities on a permissory basis. There remains, too, the further problem of the State-supported secondary schools, in which the sole religious teaching is usually Scripture once a week with a conscience clause.

Will Scripture teaching alone make (or remake) a Christian nation? The Roman Catholics say No, as also did the opponents of 'Cowper-Templeism' in the latter years of the last century. Both contended that Christianity cannot be planted through class teaching only, nor even by denominational teaching, but that it is necessary that the child should throughout be realizing his membership of the Christian society, the Church, through act and atmosphere as well as teaching. I confess to having been more inclined to see truth in this view in recent years after having been an enthusiastic Cowper-Templeist in former times. It is certainly more in accordance with the findings of psychology. But, though it is becoming obvious that the maintenance of Christian principles is vital to the State, if we are not to fall into one or other of the immoral paganisms of the totalitarian order, membership of a Christian Church must obviously be voluntary. The best that the State can do is to support the Churches by encouraging the 'agreed syllabuses,' and, if

they are not forthcoming from any particular local education authority, itself laying them down on the lines of those that have been found most successful.

It may be contended by some educators that what is really at stake is Christian morality: that this is represented in the traditional *ethos* of the school, and all else is either unproved dogma—or at best literature. There may be something in the contention, as regards school *ethos*. But what about the home *ethos*? Can the school counteract that, where it is frankly un-Christian or frankly indifferent? As to literature, to teach the Bible as literature (not as religion) has the advantage at least of familiarizing the young with the Bible, of which they are mostly so deplorably ignorant. But it is difficult to see how one can ignore religion in a book, or collection of books, whose whole intention and outlook is religious, so as to concentrate, apparently, on the beauty of words alone—form without matter.

It has always been assumed in the controversies about religious education in this country, and has been insisted on by the supporters of Church schools, that the ultimate consideration is the wishes of the parents. Have the parents of the present day made any demand for it? Perhaps I may give one piece of evidence founded on personal experience. In the suburbs of London I found that many of the parents of my pupils—belonging to the class that is notorious in general for its indifference to religion—were glad to allow a religious association for boys to give them instruction (including some simple services) on Sunday afternoons. I found that they had no idea what sort of instruction was given. In point of fact, it was of the fundamentalist order. But although they themselves were mostly not church-goers of any kind, I think they felt vaguely that they had missed something indispensable and did not want their children to miss it likewise. It was evidence of the same sort of latent feeling for religion which came to the surface during the debates on the Revised Prayer Book in the House of Commons.

Meanwhile it is notorious that, although the public schools do strive to preserve the Christian teaching and atmosphere which most of their founders desired, the churches are largely deserted by the ex-public school men. This is not to say that they have abandoned the Christian outlook, especially in world affairs.

The same is more or less true of ex-Sunday school pupils, so far as one hears. But this is a problem for the Churches, and goes beyond the limits of the Christian tradition in education.

One need would seem to be urgent at the present time, in relation to the senior pupils in our higher schools. In Sixth Forms and 'advanced courses' Science is now commonly the subject studied by the majority; and the study of science is apt to turn young minds to materialistic views unless some counteractive is found which will make an equally sincere appeal to their reason — no less sincere than the appeal of science. This may be done as a *parergon* in the course of Biblical or general religious study. But it might be possible to give it a more definitely philosophic form. It is commonly objected to such studies that they are beyond the capacity of boys, even of Sixth Form age. But such boys are now often given an introduction to the relativist theory in mathematics; and if they can understand Einstein, they are capable of some initiation to philosophical thought. I know one book at least which has been designed to make a beginning with such study and is most successful.[7] 'My Science Sixth,' remarked a public school master the other day, 'consists of thoughtful agnostics.' Exactly. What opportunity have they of becoming anything else? For in the competition of religion, presented as revealed, with scientific truth verifiable by reason and the senses, there is no doubt which will prevail unless it can be explained that there is no such competition, but that science and religion both stand on a rational basis.

[7] *The Proper Study of Mankind*, by B. A. Howard. (Ginn & Co., 1933. 3*s*. 6*d*.)

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP AND SUNDAY OBSERVANCE

By the Rev. F. E. Compton, M.A., B.Sc.

ESSENTIAL Christianity must find expression in worship —in 'the response of the creature to the eternal,' 'the acknowledgment of Transcendence, that is to say of a Reality independent of the worshipper, which is always more or less deeply coloured by mystery, and which is there first,'[1] and in the realization of the self-giving of God towards us. For there is in Christian worship a tension between 'the awestruck movement of the soul over against the surrounding mystery, and intimate devotion to the historic Person of Christ, in Whom that mystery draws near to men.'[2] Worship, then, is the response of the individual to his vision of God, and, for the Christian, it is controlled by his belief in the Incarnation, which both reveals to him the character and activity of God whom he worships, and also decides the nature of his response. For, rightly understood, it demands that the whole of human nature, and all man's activities, be gathered into the worshipping life. Hence it has become a commonplace to say that Christian worship does not consist solely of conscious acts of adoration, but in the offering of the whole life to God.

> 'The worship of God,' says Streeter, 'is not something different from the love of Humanity, the passion for the Beautiful, and the devotion to the Truth; it is not something that exists alongside of these and in addition to them; it is what they actually are whenever and in so far as they are realised in their highest form, in their true co-ordination, and in their real meaning.'[3]

It leads to the offering and consecration of life to God, and to moral struggle for greater worthiness to worship. It is the supreme activity of the human spirit, man's realization of the greatness and righteousness of God, which inspires and directs his own efforts towards righteousness, and so sanctifies the whole of his life.

But worship, essentially individual and spontaneous, must find a focus in some outward expression. The movement of the

[1] E. Underhill, *Worship*, p. 3. [2] *op. cit.*, p. 60.
[3] B. H. Streeter, in *Concerning Prayer*, p. 245.

soul towards God, and its response to the love of God, need disciplined and, to an extent, formalized expression in the ritual and ceremony of Public Worship. To quote Evelyn Underhill again :

> 'Otherwise it remains thin, abstract and notional : a tendency, an attitude, a general aspiration moving alongside human life, rather than within it.'[4]

This is a common fact of human experience. Left to himself the individual depends too much on his own limited experience and his changing moods. His religion remains too personal, and unassociated with his social life. Public worship not only provides the worshipper with the discipline of time and place that he may give expression to his worship of God, but it also strengthens his grasp of spiritual realities and quickens his response. There is, as F. H. Brabant has pointed out,[5] both an expressive and impressive aspect of public worship. Not only is it the expression of what is already clearly realized and felt by the worshipper, but also it sets before him an ideal of worship which strengthens and inspires his spiritual life. Thus, for example, public worship appeals to man's aesthetic sense, and produces 'that intensity of the entire emotional life without which the religious sense remains dry and weak.'[6] Similarly, the worshipper is helped by his power of association of idea. The building in which he worships, simple actions like kneeling and bowing the head, the repetition of time-honoured words, all associated in his mind with worship, are therefore helpful to the worshipper.

Public worship, then, consists not only of conscious adoration and praise of God, but also of worship through the growing understanding of His nature and purposes, through the appreciation of all things as an expression of His glory, through bringing before Him our own lives and the lives of others, and through seeking to interpret His will for us in the practical conduct of our lives. We meet together in public worship 'to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at His hands, to set forth His most worthy praise, to hear His most holy Word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul.' Hence the place in public worship

[4] *op. cit.*, p. 14. [5] *Liturgy and Worship*, p. 12.
[6] J. B. Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness*, p. 280.

of praise and thanksgiving, of moments of silent adoration, of Bible reading and sermon, of prayers and hymns. Hence, too, the place of sacraments, expressive of the spiritual meaning of all created things, and in Christian worship, closely connected with God's revelation of Himself in Jesus.

The value of such public worship shows itself in its effect upon life and character — both of the individual and the nation. Dr. Major has said it confers upon a community

> '"the purest treasure mortal times afford," upon the possession of which, and the propagation and development of which, human welfare, personal and social, economic and political, depend.' [7]

It gives calmness and that absence of nervous anxiety which can only come from a living faith in God. It develops self-discipline by keeping before us the consciousness of a higher order which controls the whole of life. It gives value and unity to all human activity which may be thought of as 'to the glory of God.' It does, in short, lead to the practical application of the sanctification of life, which we have seen is a distinctive characteristic of Christian worship, dependent on our conception of the nature of man, and the true purpose of his life, which comes from belief in the Incarnation.

In the Christian Church, public worship has nearly always been associated with the observance of 'the first day of the week,' as a day set apart for the worship of God and the expression of the joyfulness which comes of Christian belief. (It was comparatively late in the history of the Church that the Jewish restrictions of Sabbath observance were applied to the Christian Sunday.[8]) The Christian Sunday is, then, the first extension of the principle of worship to everyday life. It is a day set apart for the development of the higher part of our nature. It is part of the discipline necessary for the achievement of all that is most worth while. The value of public worship is increased when it is accompanied by the right, active observance of Sunday, which in turn leads to the right observance of the spiritual meaning of all days of the week.

So far we have thought of the ways in which public worship and Sunday observance are part of the expression of essential Christianity, and of importance in its life and growth. The

[7] *The Church and the Twentieth Century*, p. 62.
[8] See H. Rashdall, *Christus in Ecclesia*, ch. xv.

question now is how far these are realized in English life to-day, and in what ways can they be firmer allies of essential Christianity in the future. To speak of public worship and English life immediately brings to mind the tradition of worship associated with the English Prayer Book and the English Bible. There is no need here to relate the story of how they came into being, or to sing their praises. Some words of Percy Dearmer will suffice :

> 'We possess indeed a liturgical system which is without an equal in the world. Not only because the ceremonial is straightforward and expressive; not only because the services are so concise and finely shaped that they can be printed in a small book and followed by all; not only because they are liberal without being revolutionary and conservative without reaction-organisms and not relics; not only because they are faithful to the great humane tradition of the Bible and do not overlay the Gospel; but also because they are written in the full splendour of English prose.' [9]

But the question is—what place has this tradition of worship in English life of to-day? It is a familiar and I think a true judgment that public worship and Sunday observance have lost their creative power for a large number of people. Sunday observance has lost for many, almost entirely, its old associations, and church going is looked on as a rather unusual activity, well enough for those who like it, but no longer a natural and normal part of the nation's life.

It is instructive to review the circumstances through which this has come about. We must go back to that unfortunate coincidence of the period when the influx of the population into the towns began, with the period when the life of the Church was at its lowest ebb. True, the Evangelical Movement saved England from the worst horrors of materialism, but there took place all the same a great alienation of the life of the people from the Church. This was especially so in the poorer classes. The Church became the Church of the respectable, who enforced a strict Puritanical observance of Sunday on the whole of the country. The Hammonds[10] give us a depressing picture of the effect on the poorer classes in the towns, who were deprived of all forms of amusement and recreation on Sunday, even public gardens being closed to them on this the one day on which they could visit them. Rashdall describes this prohibition of all

[9] P. Dearmer, *Our National Church*, p. 73.
[10] J. L. and B. Hammond, *The Bleak Ages*, ch. vi.

amusements and all ordinary social intercourse as

> 'the unhappy peculiarity of English and Scottish Puritanism, though doubtless closely connected with much that was best and most solid in the great movement which is after all the chief source of the religion of modern England.' [11]

Yet little provision was made for the religious life of those who were thus deprived of most of their normal life on Sunday. A pamphlet [12] published in 1815 stated that in London '953,000 souls were without opportunity of parochial worship,' though the Methodist Movement, and the response to those churches which had been invigorated by the Evangelical Revival, show that people were ready to respond and felt the need of public worship.

Later in the century another factor in the history of the Church caused further alienation of the people from the Church. The Oxford Movement directed the revival of Christian life which began with the Evangelical Movement into the more precise limits of the life of the Church, and so hastened the awakening of the Church to her responsibilities. But in its later ritualistic phase the movement lost sight of the real purposes of public worship, and those who directed the services of the Church became too much concerned with the past and with liturgical archaeology, and

> 'thanks to this diverting of her energies, the Church lost her opportunity to understand and lead the aspirations of the people.' [13]

This grew out of that false and sentimental regard for the past —in particular the Middle Ages—which was not confined to the Church but is common to all the later stages of the Romantic Movement. It is seen nowhere more clearly than in the church architecture of the period — in that unhappy copying of Gothic architecture which so obviously misses the spirit of the original. It symbolizes a Church life uncreative in itself and out of touch with the life of the people, and it associated the Christian religion with that unnatural and unreal atmosphere which we associate with the stained-glass windows of the period.

There was, however, another side to the life of the Church which showed a deeper appreciation of the needs of the people. Many clergymen devoted their lives to the poorer classes of the towns. The practice of public worship and Sunday observance

[11] H. Rashdall, *op. cit.*, p. 219.
[12] See Overton, *The English Church in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 145.
[13] C. E. Raven, *Christian Socialism*, p. 20.

did not entirely disappear. The beginning of the century saw the development of the Sunday evening service and the Sunday school movement. Both have done much to associate Sunday with the practice of public worship. A big section of the population, even to-day, still think it normal and right to send their children to a place of worship or religious instruction even though they never think of going themselves!

The results of these phases in the life of the Church we see to-day in the place that public worship and Sunday observance hold in the life of the nation. The tradition is by no means dead, but except for a comparatively few, it has ceased to be a creative force in modern life. People who have grown up with no outward expression and development of their instinctive religious sense live lives which lack those qualities which public worship could have given to them. The deep understanding and sanctification of the whole life, which we have seen can come from worship, is not theirs. They seek relief from life's purposeless monotony in the life-escaping pleasures of modern amusements, rather than in finding a re-interpretation of their lives and a strengthening of their appreciation of spiritual things through worship. So also their belief in God and in the way of life which is the practical interpretation of the Incarnation, unnourished by expression in corporate worship, and opposed by the growing scepticism and materialism of the age (both due often to ignorance of spiritual things), have ceased to be living realities for them. There is little cause for wonder that when everyday life itself leads to none of the values which are expressed in worship, when its basis is doubted and not understood, and when whatever religious experience they have finds no emotional expression, that people have lost all sense of worship and trust in God.

The task of the Church is therefore twofold. She inherits not only the great tradition of the Prayer Book but also the English custom of public worship damaged and distorted. First, then, she must restore faith in the great truths of the Christian religion which have faded from the hearts of ordinary people because it has not found vivid expression for them in worship, and re-establish worship, both in the practice of public worship and in the wider sense of the dedication of the whole life to God,

as a normal and necessary activity of human life. This is the task of evangelism and education. And, secondly, she must secure that the acts of public worship themselves are a full expression of essential Christianity in such a form that they are sincere and real expressions of the need of modern people and lead to a growth of their spiritual life. The Church would do well to remember the words of Bishop Creighton, written at the close of the last century:

> 'The English Church must be the religious organ of the English people. The people need not all agree about details, but the general trend must be regulated by their wishes,' [14]

and yet keep before the people the ideals of Christian life and belief, which are not yet fully expressed and accepted in national life to-day.

These two tasks are not separate from one another, since public worship, as is fully realized by the Roman Church, is one of the most effective means of education in Christian faith and life. We see then, in passing, the importance of teaching children the art of worship. They are free from many of the inhibitions which make worship and adoration difficult for the adult, and it gives a tone to their lives which is never entirely lost.

This paper is concerned with the second of the two tasks of the Church. It may be stated thus: How is the English tradition of worship to be made available and relevant for people to-day? There are many in the Church who are aware of this task — and many who are not — and two main types of experiment in and development of public worship stand out clearly above the unimaginative and dreary ordering of the Prayer Book services which is still found in so many churches. These two types of experiments we must consider in some detail.

1. First there is the type to which we may give the name of the 'Popular Service,' in a lower and a higher sense. It may mean a mere 'stunt' to increase the size of the congregation with an eye to outward success, or it may be a real attempt to make the service fulfil the spiritual needs of the congregation and relevant to modern life, and in that way to appeal and be popular. The method generally used is either within the framework of the Prayer Book services or else, in an entirely 'free' service,

[14] *Life of Bishop Creighton*, II, p. 301.

to adapt the service to modern needs or the particular occasion. We must include such services as Youth Services, Men's Services, services for special occasions, such as Harvest Festival and Hospital Sunday, to mention only two of this type. The lessons are chosen, not from the Lectionary, but to fit in with the theme of the service. Similarly the hymns and the prayers, and the sermon becomes an integral part of the service. Such experiments lead naturally to the need of Prayer Book revision, that the Prayer Book itself may express sincerely and straightforwardly essential Christianity. The general trend of such revision will be familiar to readers of this paper, and therefore need not be further considered here.

Such 'popular' services attempt directly and simply to relate worship to modern life. We are not to leave behind our daily life when we come into church. It is to be in church a part of our worshipping life, so that it remains so outside church. The weaknesses of this type of service are, first, that they are often neither so well balanced nor so beautifully and simply expressed as are the Prayer Book services, to which one returns with a sense of repose and greater appreciation. Again, often those who plan such services are frequently too 'subjective'[15] in their outlook. They seek to influence the congregation, to bring them into the right state of mind, rather than make the service a real act of worship. 'Concentration on the *ethos* takes the place which rightly belongs to adoration of the *Logos*.'[16]

A second type of 'popular' service is the 'Mission Service.' This has somewhat fallen into disrepute owing to its often crude emotional appeal and one-sided presentation of the Gospel, but we should do well to consider whether the Prayer Book services — Morning and Evening Prayer, for example — are the most suitable forms of service for those who are out of touch with all forms of worship. Services graded to the needs and capabilities of those who attend them are surely necessary, and 'Mission' services of this kind need not be confined to the poorer sections of the parish.

2. The second type of development of worship is that which has its origin in the Oxford Movement and stresses the importance of the Liturgy. There has, indeed, been throughout the

[15] See J. B. Pratt, *op. cit.*, ch. xiv. [16] E. Underhill, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

Church, and in the Free Churches as well, a greater appreciation of the outward expression of worship. As A. G. Hebert has said :

> 'By the influence of the Church service the regular Church people are moulded ; for the things which they do in church make a deeper impression than the teaching which reaches the mind.' [17]

We will consider the type of worship which derives its inspiration from the medieval tradition of worship and the ancient Liturgies of the Church. The more extreme services of this kind we need not consider. They are the outcome of the worst side of the Oxford Movement. Evelyn Underhill writes :

> 'The Oxford Movement is not seen at its best on the extreme right, where a deliberate medievalism and an excessive use of Italian ornament obscure the liturgical outline and fail to express the peculiar *ethos* of English religion.' [18]

Nor will we consider here the association of this type of worship with the re-introduction of those 'dark and dumb ceremonies' which were excluded from the English Church at the Reformation. We must be careful, however, not to let these things prejudice us against ritual and ceremony themselves. 'Abuse taketh not away the proper use.'

But it is in less extreme forms that there is shown a certain grasp of the essentials of public worship. The value of the Liturgy as a vivid and compelling presentation of Christian belief is understood. The need, for those whose religious sense has been deadened by modern life, to develop an 'atmosphere of worship' through an appeal to the aesthetic sense is realized. (We remember that the ritualist movement in the nineteenth century was, like the pre-Raphaelite movement, a protest against the ugliness of industrial England.) The value of public worship as a corporate, social act is stressed, and the worshipper is offered security in the dogmas and liturgy of the Church which have the authority of a long tradition.

The service of Holy Communion, it is claimed, is the service in which all this is realized. There is a desire to make it the central service of the English Church, though it can hardly be said to have succeeded. The most recent attempt to do this is associated with the name of the 'Parish Communion.' It is an attempt to remove some of the weaknesses of the ritualistic

[17] A. G. Hebert, *Liturgy and Society*, p. 39.
[18] E. Underhill, *op. cit.*, p. 334.

movement. It is pointed out that this did not lead to congregational worship. The congregation were liable to be passive spectators of the liturgy performed in the sanctuary, and the practical arrangements of Sunday and the insistence on fasting made the communion of the laity at the chief service of the day impossible. The solution is to make a service of Holy Communion, usually at 9 o'clock, the central service of the day, at which the whole congregation communicates. The idea owes a great deal to the Liturgical Movement in the Roman Church. The people are taught the meaning of the Liturgy, so that what is performed in the sanctuary becomes an act of corporate worship. The musical settings are simple, so that all can join in them. The sense of corporate fellowship is helped by a communal breakfast after the service.

There is much in this that commands our respect. It shows, up to a point, a fine understanding of the art of public worship and of modern needs — especially of the need for corporate fellowship in worship. And yet it is an experiment which in many ways fails. First, because it offers to the modern mind, in the place of doubts and uncertainties, the security of the dogmas of the Church, which on no account must be related to modern thought but accepted as a closed system.[19] It presents to people the kind of worship, then, which is of value only to the type of mind which can accept the beliefs behind it without question, and is meaningless to anyone else. Secondly, it fails to express the essential link between the worship of God in church, the other activities of the worshipping life, and the sanctification of life. True, it is claimed that this is achieved. It is said that the whole of man's life is offered to God at the altar, and is received back sanctified and redeemed. But there is a danger that for many people it will mean that their everyday life is given a veneer of religious emotion and sentiment and nothing more. Consider, for instance, the emotional atmosphere of churches associated with this kind of service. There is a deliberate attempt, even in those that are modern in style, to make the atmosphere 'other' than that of everyday life. The modern man finds beauty and worship in this way only by escape from his everyday life.

[19] See A. G. Hebert, *op. cit.*, p. 33*ff*.

This is due in the first place to mistaking religious emotion for religion itself, and thinking that worship comes through developing a 'sense of the numinous'—an expression often misunderstood—and, secondly, through a narrowing down of the full meaning of essential Christianity. The Church is narrowed down to those who accept certain statements of the Christian faith and who take part in certain liturgical services. The Gospel is mediated to us only through the Church so defined. The sacramental principle, in practice if not in theory, is limited to the sacraments of the Church. As Chancellor J. S. Bezzant has pointed out, any view of the sacraments which suggests

> 'anything like transubstantiation seems inevitably to set what happens in the Eucharist outside, if not in opposition to, the whole natural order,' [20]

and therefore destroys the essential link between worship and life. It means a restriction of the meaning of the Incarnation, which gives the distinctive character to Christian worship. Whenever the idea of the sanctification of life tries to enter into this kind of worship, it leads to unreal and artificial symbolism, as for example in the Offertory Procession which is usually a part of the Parish Communion.

The study of these experiments in public worship shows clearly the need for and value of them. The working out of our new understanding of the importance of ritual, for example, can only come through practical experiment, and the relating of public worship to modern thought and modern life must always be the task of a living Church. We have come to-day, thanks to Percy Dearmer more than anyone else, to see public worship as a form of Art. Like all art, it is a creative act by which man gives expression to his deepest experiences. There must therefore be the same freedom for the development which is essential to any art if it is to remain creative. Criticism must be based, not on formal rules or literal-minded appeals to tradition, but on the criteria of judgment which are inherent in the art itself. There must be in public worship, then, freedom for development and growth, together with sincere and constructive criticism based on understanding of the nature of Christian worship.

But experiments with the outward forms of worship are not

[20] In an article in the *Modern Churchman*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 587.

sufficient. It must be the sincere expression of deeply-felt Christian conviction. It must go to the heart of the Christian faith, and not lose its reality and power in too great a regard for non-essentials and externals which may obscure or even oppose its real meaning. The revival of worship in the ninteenth century owed its origin to the Evangelical Movement (the leaders of the Oxford Movement were deeply influenced by evangelical piety), which was, in spirit, a return to essential Christianity. It may well be that the present-day regard of the Church's worship as irrelevant, and its lack of power to influence the lives of so many people, are due to its concern with so many minor issues, of importance, no doubt, to those steeped in the life of the Church, but of no importance or concern to those who look to the Church, from without, for help and guidance.

There is, I believe, to-day a movement in the Church which points the way forward. It is the desire for Intercommunion. For that must lead to a concentration on the essential beliefs and practices which unite all Christians — their trust in God, their loyalty to their Master, their common source of inspiration — and a true and generous estimate of those things in which they differ. And this re-valuation of Christian belief will find expression in worship which will itself reflect the essentials of Christian conviction, and which, because it comes from a sincere stirring of the human spirit, will be sincere and simple and real. It is the experience of those who have taken part in services of Intercommunion that the service, even when imperfect in its expression, takes on a new meaning, and the movement is bound to lead to new experiments in worship which will express the spiritual convictions that lie behind it.

This indicates the kind of way in which public worship can become a firmer ally of essential Christianity in English life. It must be the expression of the full content of the Christian faith. The great truths that are its essential have their link with all human religious experience and all human needs. Its sincerity and simplicity, which come from real conviction, give it a universal appeal. Such public worship, then, and its extension of Sunday observance, can therefore find their right and natural place in English life, and become creative of those values which can come from essential Christianity alone.

THEOLOGICAL CONTROVERSY IN THE MISSION FIELD

By E. C. Dewick, M.A., B.D., Warden Y.M.C.A. Hostel, Nagpur.

In recent years there has been an increasing readiness to recognize that the practical work of the Church depends, in the long run, much more largely upon a sound theological background than some of the nineteenth century advocates of 'The Social Gospel' were prepared to admit. Particularly is this the case in the Foreign Mission Field, where far-reaching changes of method and policy have been generally adopted during the last fifty years, but in many cases without seriously considering the theological implications logically involved therein.

The World Missionary Conference at Tambaram (Madras) in 1938 realized clearly the importance of reconsidering the theological basis upon which the missionary enterprise rests. In particular, Dr. Hendrik Kraemer's book, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, which was written as an 'introduction' to the Tambaram Conference, had challenged the growing tendency toward a more 'liberal' policy in relation to the non-Christian faiths, as being inconsistent with the fundamental doctrines of Christianity; and the challenge had been presented with a forcefulness and ability which could not be merely ignored.

So when *The Message of the Tambaram Conference* was published last year by the Oxford University Press in seven attractive and important volumes, it was a mark of wise Christian statesmanship to begin the series with a discussion of the theological basis of Foreign Missions, under the title of 'The Authority of Faith.'

The actual content of this volume is not quite so comprehensive as the title might suggest; and a sub-title, 'Dr. Kraemer and his Critics,' would perhaps prepare the reader better for what he will find within; for the issues discussed are mainly those raised by Dr. Kraemer in his book. But these issues are

certainly far-reaching and fundamental; and the treatment of them here is on the whole worthy of a volume with so august a title.

The opening essay is by Dr. Kraemer himself, under the heading 'Continuity or Discontinuity.' It reiterates the main thesis of his book, with (if possible) an increased emphasis:

> '"Nature," "reason," and "history" do not afford preambles, avenues or lines of development towards the realm of Grace and Truth as manifest in Jesus Christ. . . . It is mistaken and misleading to describe the religious pilgrimage of mankind as a preparation or a leading-up to a so-called consummation or fulfilment in Christ. . . . This fundamental discontinuity of the world of spiritual reality, embodied in the Revelation in Christ, to the whole range of human religion, *excludes* the possibility and legitimacy of a *Theologia Naturalis* in the sense of a science of God and Man, conceived as an imperfect form of revelation, introductory to the world of Divine Grace in Christ' (pp. 2-4).

The practical consequence of such a 'Weltanschauung' is that real *co-operation* in religious thinking between Christian and non-Christian is impossible, and ought not to be attempted. The Christian's business is to proclaim, not to share; to teach, not to listen. This applies alike to the lands overseas, which have been commonly spoken of in the past as 'non-Christian,' and to European lands in which the prevalent philosophy of life is now no less opposed to the Christian Gospel.

Dr. Kraemer recognizes that in the past there have been, even within the Church, two opposite methods of approaching this problem; and as examples he cites two outstanding Christian thinkers — Clement of Alexandria on the one hand, and Karl Barth on the other. In some details he himself criticizes Barth; but substantially he follows him, and considers that the acceptance of Barth's main position is 'inescapable' (p. 23). Nevertheless, he recognizes that the Alexandrian tradition does still persist, and was in fact expressed by some delegates at Tambaram; but he is of the opinion that the measure of agreement reached there between the 'Alexandrians' and the 'Barthians' was 'appallingly small' (p. 7). Hence there is evident need for further study of the root-causes of this divergence. In this essay, Dr. Kraemer restates his own position, and the pre-suppositions underlying it, with a clearness which should dispel many misunderstandings. 'Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re' might be Dr. Kraemer's motto; for while his general suavity, and even

humility, of tone is a model for Christian writers, he never yields to his critics by so much as an inch.

In the volume under our consideration, the issues raised by Dr. Kraemer are discussed by various writers. Some of these are mainly appreciative; others more or less critical. Of the former, perhaps the most noteworthy is by a young Indian Christian philosopher, Prof. D. G. Moses, of Hislop College, Nagpur, who writes on the 'Truth of Religion.' He agrees with Dr. Kraemer in starting from the axiom that Christianity is bound to proclaim its message as final and absolute Truth (p. 65). From this, a closely-reasoned argument leads to the conclusion that this claim must ultimately rest on faith — a faith, moreover, which cannot be substantiated by the reason of the natural man, though it may be confirmed by the *spiritually-enlightened reason* of the soul that has come to know Christ:

> 'Reason, before the gift of the Gospel in Jesus Christ, is helpless; or, if it functions, it gives us only a distorted version of the truth. But once the revelation has come, it is able to show why it ought to have been like that only, and not something else' (p. 88).

This view of the limitations of human reason in the natural man stands in marked contrast with the more generous estimate of the functions of reason which is characteristic of those who follow the 'Alexandrian' tradition. The latter generally views human reason as being in itself one of God's good gifts to man, imperfect indeed, but (in the words of old Benjamin Whichcote, one of the Cambridge Platonists of the seventeenth century) 'the candle of the Lord, lighted by God, and lighting men to God.'

A more definitely Barthian point of view is expressed in the essay by Dr. Hartenstein, Director of the Basel Mission on 'The Biblical view of Religion.' His language and thought are typically 'Continental.' He holds that the Christian missionary in his relations with non-Christians must resolutely eschew the temptation to adopt a 'sympathetic' attitude, while at the same time he must guard himself against the attitude of the 'superior person.' He must approach non-Christians with an uncompromising 'No,' and must summon them 'to leave the burning house of their ancestors'; yet he must never forget that he himself is only an instrument in the hands of God (p. 145*f.*). Dr. Hartenstein seems to think that this is a *new* method of missionary approach; but we fail to see that it differs in any essential from

the methods of the missionary pioneers of a century ago. Carey, Martyn and Duff were certainly not lacking either in personal humility or in decisive conviction, and it seems to us that in this matter the views of the modern 'Barthians' simply represent a return to those of traditional Evangelicalism.

But while Dr. Kraemer's main thesis thus receives support from some of the essayists in this volume, the majority of them are more or less critical of his position. Of these, one of the most stimulating is Dr. Hogg, formerly Principal of Madras Christian College, who writes on 'The Christian Attitude to non-Christian Faith,' distinguishing carefully 'non-Christian faith' from 'the non-Christian *faiths*.' With regard to the latter (viewed as systems of religious thought) he agrees with Dr. Kraemer that points of contact between them and the Christian faith 'can be found only by antithesis' (p. 109). But in the light of his own long contact with non-Christians, he pleads that we should recognize that, in individual cases, the faith of non-Christians has brought them into real contact with God, and that God has truly revealed Himself to them. Not, perhaps, according to the full measure of the revelation of Divine Fatherhood as shown to us by Christ, but still in a genuine revelation, creating a life which, although 'without Christ,' is yet 'hid in God' (p. 110). It is obvious that those who hold this view will, as missionaries, approach non-Christians with a very different attitude from that of the followers of Dr. Kraemer, who are bound to regard all non-Christians as devoid of any real 'revealed' knowledge of God.

An even sharper contrast to Dr. Kraemer's position is offered by a Chinese Christian scholar, Dr. T. C. Chao. He associates 'Revelation' and 'Incarnation' not only with Divine acts in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, but as essential elements in the *whole* of God's operation in the world. His line of thought often reminds us of Moberly, Du Bose, or Streeter. After referring to Confucius and other sages of his own country, he says :

> 'Who can say that these sages have not been truly inspired by the Spirit of God, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ? . . . God has always been active in human affairs. . . .
>
> [The Incarnation] cannot mean a quick thrust of God's life into a fiery furnace, to snatch His children who have fallen into it. Before Jesus came into the world, God had been coming, breaking into the lives of men who sought after Him' (pp. 47-49).

On a theological basis such as this, the 'sympathetic' approach not only to individual non-Christians, but also to the non-Christian religious systems, is amply justified. It is broadly supported also by other writers in this volume, including Dr. Reichelt of China, Dr. Horton of the U.S.A., and (to some extent) by Dr. H. H. Farmer of England.

A careful perusal of this volume as a whole will, we think, show that the divergence between Dr. Kraemer and his critics may be traced back largely to two different basic axioms, from which two divergent lines of argument inevitably emerge. Dr. Kraemer defines the axiom from which he starts as follows:

> 'In all my reasoning I take my standpoint *within* the realm of the Christian Revelation. From it I take my standards of judgment and evaluation. The Christian Revelation itself is my authoritative guide, and no other principle or standpoint.'

Now what precisely does Dr. Kraemer mean by this? From the line of argument which follows, it seems clear that he means that he starts from the assumption that the Revelation given by God in Christ is final, absolutely true, and so essentially different from any other knowledge of God available for man, that it is, in fact, the *only real* Revelation of what God is, and of what God has done. This is an assumption which he does not (so far as we have observed) anywhere attempt to prove; he simply takes it as an axiom from which all his reasoning starts. Indeed, he himself admits that this may not unfairly be called 'a prejudiced position'; but he urges that everyone is compelled to have *some* unproved ultimate from which his thinking starts; and that his own method is no *more* prejudiced than that of anyone else (p. 8).

But if we turn from Dr. Kraemer to his critics, we find that these writers all seem to have a different method of approach. Each of them appeals to the 'facts of life' as he has known them; and these 'facts' cover a wider range than 'the Christian Revelation' as defined by Dr. Kraemer. For instance, Dr. Hogg, though admitting that the fact of non-Christian faith is 'a subject of sincere perplexity' for the Christian, goes on to say:

> 'Why then am I so convinced of its actual existence? Most of all, because I am sure that I have actually met with it. I have known and have had fellowship with some for whom Christ was not absolute Lord and Saviour, who held beliefs of the typical Hindu colour, and yet who manifestly were no strangers to the life hid in God' (p. 11).

Dr. Reichelt and Dr. Horton make a similar appeal to the 'facts of life' as a whole (pp. 99, 169). With all these writers, 'facts' come first, and theories second; and if they find that any theory or doctrine appears to be inconsistent with the 'facts' as they have experienced them or known of them, then the theory must be revised accordingly. Dr. Kraemer, on the other hand, if he finds an apparent conflict between apparent 'facts' and the theory of Revelation from which he starts, still adheres at all costs to his theory of Revelation, and prefers, if need be, to conclude that his estimate of the facts must be wrong.

We may also notice another important distinction between the point of view of Dr. Kraemer and that of his critics. The latter are very conscious of the element of *imperfection* in all apprehension of truth by man, due to the human organs through which the apprehension is received and expressed. Thus Dr. Hogg writes:

> 'I am persuaded that it is radically wrong for the missionary to approach men of other faiths under a conviction — no matter how sincerely humble that conviction may be — that he and his fellow-believers are witnesses to a Divine revelation, while other religions are exclusively the product of a human "religious consciousness." Is not the so-called universal religious consciousness just the universal manifesting of a human response to God's continually active endeavour to reveal Himself to man?' (p. 106).

Or again:

> 'The thought and language in which man expresses to himself or others his apprehension of that spiritual self-disclosure [of God] has to be human thought, human language — always defective, sometimes gravely distorting' (p. 108).

Similarly, Dr. Horton says:

> 'When we as Christian missionaries approach men of other faiths, we do so, not as partisans of a particular human movement, but as those who believe ourselves to have been touched and claimed, in Christ and the Church, by the one Truth on which the being and well-being of the whole creation do veritably rest. We do not claim to possess this Truth in its entirety' (p. 160).

Consequently these writers consider that the divine and the human elements in all religions are to some extent mutually interpenetrative, and that human minds cannot define exactly where the one ends and the other begins. Dr. Kraemer, on the other hand, though theoretically admitting the imperfection of human judgment, does not hesitate to draw a sharp dividing line between the content of the Christian revelation, which is 'of

God,' and that of all other religions, which he regards as merely human and 'not-God.'

It seems to us that in a volume which claims to discuss 'The Authority of the Faith' some attention ought to be given to a point of view which finds little or no expression among the writers now before us, namely, that of definitely 'left-wing' or 'modernist' thinkers. This point of view, in relation to Foreign Missions, was expressed a few years ago in the American Laymen's Report, entitled *Re-thinking Missions*, and in Dr. D. J. Fleming's book, *Ways of sharing with other Faiths*; also (more recently) in the volume of Essays by Indian Christians, *Re-thinking Christianity in India*. These writers all encourage the missionaries to co-operate with men of other faiths in a common search for God, and in a spirit of mutual contribution to a larger truth. But the Tambaram writers all seem to be agreed that this liberal ideal not only enfeebles the Christian missionary motive, but is fundamentally inconsistent with the essentials of the Christian claim to offer a final Revelation of God (p. 66). 'Missions' and 'Modernism' are thus regarded as incompatible with each other, in so far as Modernism stands for the open mind and the questing spirit, while Missions rest upon a conviction of Absolute Truth.

In this emphasis upon the necessity of 'Absolutism' in Christianity, the Message of Tambaram is in line with a prevalent tendency in present-day theology. Nevertheless, it seems to us that if 'Absolutism' is to win the assent of those who at present view it with misgivings, its advocates must be prepared to support its claims with arguments more cogent than those which they have so far offered. It is not sufficient for this purpose to urge (as several of the writers in this volume do) that a belief in the Absolute Truth of the Christian Revelation is *necessary* in order to supply an adequate impulse for missionary activity. A devout Roman Catholic might with equally good reason maintain that the belief in the unique Divine authority of the Papacy is 'necessary' in order to give impetus to the missions of his Church. This may well be the case; but even if so, it is hardly likely to convince any Protestant of the *truth* of the doctrine of Papal Infallibility. A belief that is useful, and even dynamic, is not necessarily true.

Charles Morgan, in his 'Essay on Single-mindedness' which forms the Preface to his play, *The Flashing Stream*, says:

> 'Except through absolutism, singleness of mind is not to be understood. Because life is conditional and insecure, men have always sought for, and often have invented, absolutes to which they might cling' (p. 7).

Morgan here affirms, on the one hand, the undoubted *power* of 'absolutism' to fascinate and inspire the mind of men; but he also recognizes that this does not of itself prove that the belief in each particular case rests upon reality; it may be only 'invented' by man. The Tambaram writers do not always seem to have borne this in mind.

Another saying in Charles Morgan's Preface also deserves to be remembered in this connection: 'True absolutism seems always to have been approached by a series of reasoned acceptances.' The advocates of 'absolutism' sometimes seem to think that they can support their claims by vehemence of affirmation rather than by sobriety of argument. Even Dr. Kraemer, who as a rule is scrupulously courteous to his opponents, affirms in one place that 'a sincere Christian who does not take his stand *within* the realm of the Christian revelation,' or who attempts to base his faith on anything outside that revelation, is 'a stupendous and incredible person,' who 'poses as taking a more "objective" and "neutral" standpoint' (p. 8). But the fact remains that there *are* many Christians (including, as we have seen above, some of the writers in this volume) who do appeal to the facts of life as a whole in support of their faith, and are not prepared to ignore everything that cannot be included within the sphere of the revelation made specifically by Jesus Christ. Dr. Kraemer's own quotations from the Alexandrian Fathers (pp. 15-18) show that this type of Christian thought is ancient and widespread; and it can hardly be dismissed as 'incredible,' or as a mere 'pose.'

The whole problem of 'absolutism' in religion is a very difficult one; and those who insist upon the necessity of this element in Christianity need to define their terms with care. What precisely *is* the 'absolute' element in the Christian message? If the answer is 'Christ,' does this imply that all His knowledge, words and deeds had this quality of finality? Again, does the

term 'Christ' refer only to the historic person, Jesus of Nazareth? Or does it include what St. Paul calls 'the Spiritual Rock' which followed the chosen race even in pre-Christian days (*I Cor.* x, 4)? Or is the seed of God's Word scattered even more widely, outside the Christian Church, as the Alexandrian Fathers taught? All these questions need careful consideration. Moreover, if we all have (as Dr. Kraemer himself admits) 'only a partial and imperfect understanding of the Christian revelation' (p. 7), how is it possible for us to be positive that only at one point (which is, of necessity, seen and defined by us through our relative minds) is the Absolute revealed?

It does not seem to us that the volume under our consideration carries us very far towards the solution of these great problems, or towards a satisfactory interpretation of the Authority of the Faith. But we welcome its publication both for the admirable clarity with which the views of its writers are set forth, and also for the sincerity, courtesy and charity with which they express themselves. In these respects, it is a model for all Christian writers engaging in controversy or conference.

It also raises, in a very challenging form, an issue which must be faced by the Christian Church in these days when 'Totalitarianism' seems to be winning almost universal assent in the sphere of politics as the only effective type of government. It is obvious that this political Totalitarianism is a menace to the liberty of Christian people; but the Church has yet to decide whether she will endeavour to meet this by making a rival totalitarian claim for the Christian Revelation, or whether the true answer is to maintain that, since 'we know in part' only in this world, totalitarian claims of any kind, whether political or religious, are bound to be false, because they attribute to human words and thoughts that quality of absolutism which in truth belongs only to God.

A MEDITATION UPON TWO ANCIENT BRASSES

By the Rev. A. Earle, M.A., B.D., author of *Essays on Mediaeval Subjects*.

WHEN passing recently through the parish of Coleshill in Warwickshire, which stands like 'a city set on an hill,' I stayed for a while to admire its noble church and ancient monuments, and linger where pious care has preserved so much of beauty from one generation to another. In the Chancel may be observed two brasses of former vicars; they are somewhat unusually small and inconspicuous, but they appeared to me to illustrate, in a manner that challenged attention, the passing of one age and the commencement of another.

The one brass represents William Abett, a vicar of Coleshill who died in the year 1500. He is drawn holding in his hand a chalice of beautiful mediaeval design, at the rim of which is shown the wafer stamped with the sacred letters I.H.S. There is no possibility of mistaking the teaching and message. The wafer is the Body of Christ and the priestly ministry of William Abett has centred round that daily miracle of making the Body of Christ. The whole structure of mediaeval theology may be visualized in that diminutive brass of the priest holding the chalice and wafer in his hand. How often in the mystic or romantic spirit of the Middle Ages one's instinct is to bow the head and bend the knee! How often, again, does one's instinct rebel when the same holy mysteries are brought into commonplace association with crude superstition, or linked with commercial usages to determine even the fortunes of the dead!

The other brass illustrates a profound change that has passed over religious thought, and yet the vicar represented here may almost have been the successor of the other. It depicts the figure of Sir John Fenton, priest, who died in the year 1566. His countenance is open and intellectual; in the left hand he holds a book inscribed *Verbum Dei*, while the right hand with

pointing finger calls attention to the book and its inscription. Here again can be no mistake. The Greek Testament of Erasmus has appeared, the English Bibles of Tyndale and Coverdale have been set before the people. 'Matthew's' Bible, 'The Great Bible,' 'The Geneva Bible' have all followed in the course of a few years, and 'the Word of God' has been set up in every parish church.

The inscription upon the brass of William Abett in 1500 is in Latin and ends with the set phrase *Cujus animae propitietur Deus*, but the brass of Sir John Fenton in 1566 is in English and ends with the prayer 'Whose soul Jesus pardon.'

There is indeed much religious history to be discerned in a comparison of these two brasses within the parish church of Coleshill. When the commemoration of the English Reformation was observed in 1938 the focus was the English Bible, and there was wisely an avoidance of those controversies which are inseparable from so intricate a period of history. It is impossible, however, not to be acutely conscious that during the sixteenth century one age, the mediaeval and feudal, is passing away, and that a new age is dawning. The age of the manuscript copy gives way to the age of printed books, the Renaissance enlarges the range of the intellect, the very boundaries and horizons of the earth are extended, and men from the West enter into strange lands to carry there their ambitions and blunders and greed, while in European fields rulers and politicians study how to direct and exploit the new waves of human thought and activity to serve their own ends and purposes.

In the sphere of religion the English Bible provided a startling contrast to the generally accepted ecclesiastical system of the Middle Ages. The simple stood out against the complex. The poverty of the Gospel against the riches of the Church. The plain words of Christ against the subtleties of Scholasticism. Religious study was understood to be more fruitful when directed to the Word of God rather than to the Canon Law. All this is typified in the brass of Sir John Fenton holding the Word of God in one hand, and pointing to it with the finger of the other. Religious faith and life are henceforth to rest upon the sure foundation of the Pure Word of God. Those former ages when the daily miracle brought the Word of God to be made

flesh and dwell amongst us, were now dissolving before another vision when the Word of God in the printed page should by His spirit speak to him who reads.

But just as the simplicity of making the presence of the wonder-working Christ became involved and entangled in arid controversies, in soul destroying superstitions and even in corrupt practices, so too the possession of 'the simple Gospel' and 'the plain Word of God' has not proved in the course of the centuries the guide beyond controversy and above question that mankind once thought it to be.

It is strange that when one part of the New Testament itself speaks of other parts as hard to be understood, and capable of being wrested by the less stable and discerning into meanings making for destruction rather than life[1]; and when the great thinker Marcion almost at the commencement of the Christian era could so little reconcile the God of the Old Testament with the God of the New, that he was compelled to the explanation that the God of the New sent Jesus to deliver mankind from the God of the Old: it is strange that the priest of the brass in Coleshill Church could so confidently point to 'the Word of God' as the solution of all the difficulties of belief. To him the Word of God was all sufficient, and yet he had not that key of the gradual evolution of the doctrine of God which helps us to unlock much at the present time.

He was unaware of the various sources which go to make up the earlier books of the Old Testament, though the difficulty of faith does not lie so much in this fact as in the thought that the books of the Old Testament have been worked over time and again in various interests. In the New Testament the difficulty of faith lies in the discovery that we have there much less of Christ than we supposed, and much more of the interpretations or character-studies of Christ by various persons, from different points of view, and for various readers. The priest of Coleshill pointing to his Bible was untroubled by the thought that this or that familiar saying is but a gloss upon the text, or by the uncomfortable conviction that legendary matter has been incorporated, or that a whole generation had gone by in silence before the Gospel began to take several shapes in written records.

[1] *II Peter* iii, 16.

We who live in an age which is reshaping itself, the future forms of which whether political, economic or religious none can predict, are prompted by these Coleshill brasses to ponder on that time, four hundred years ago, when one age passed and another took its place, although there is always thought that is ahead of its age as there is thought which lags behind it. There are the precursors and the survivors, and there remain records of those rare and precious minds which, perceiving and preserving the best of every age, enshrine that which being of absolute truth can never pass away.

We are asked to consider the age of Sir John Fenton, priest, when the mediaeval was giving place to a modern which has now become old and near to vanishing away, and to remember that age especially as the one which gave us our English Bible. That 'plain and pure Word of God' we to-day find neither so plain nor so pure as they were given eyes to see it, though it still contains for us our basic revelation of God and duty. What further revelation is the Spirit of God providing in our own new age until another takes its place?

Some of us are expecting that, our eyes being enlightened by a further guidance into the Truth by Him who is the Spirit of Truth, we may find grace to recognize and re-express so much as is of the Truth in every age, including our own. And so going forward in the ministry of the Word and Sacraments without consciousness of falsehood, we may learn what is the purpose of God for us all and mankind under the leadership of the Spirit of Christ.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of *The Modern Churchman*

THE FACTS OF EASTER.

SIR,

The intention of my letter in your June issue, all too crudely expressed, was to bring the facts of Easter into line with what we know of God's method of working, which science calls the laws of Nature. It is a question of evidence. It was suggested that possibly our Lord did not actually die on the Cross, and that His subsequent appearances were those of still strong-willed but dying days. In your July issue you give evidence against such a suggestion, and give the case for a psychical interpretation of the post-crucial appearances. This puts a strain on our intelligence; but the strain is not perhaps impossible in the growing light of a truthful psychology.

This public exchange of thought in the search for truth illustrates what seems to be our common aim. We do not rule out miracle. X-rays, aeroplanes, the splitting of the atom, surgery of heart and brain, would all be miracles to men of the last and previous centuries. But to us they are a revelation; they all fall into line with our widening conception of natural law; and the search for truth convinces us more and more of the unity of the universe. Does this in any way belittle our faith in our Lord's Gospel and the effect of His Death on the Cross? Not a bit; it strengthens it. He Himself seems to have used the powers, which appeared supernatural to His unscientific audience, as an introduction to His spiritual Gospel. Surely we have, in material ways and thought, advanced in nineteen centuries with our food from the Tree of Knowledge. We explain, but our explanations bring us little nearer to the root-causes.

A recent leaflet by the Oxford Group contains the sentence: 'Easter dramatises the real struggle in the world.' That is the essence of the faith we hold to through thick and thin. The Bible is an Oriental book, written in the vein of imagery and symbol, to which common western thought is unaccustomed. We are re-learning the lesson, through drama and the stage, that minds are governed by pictures of the truth; that spiritual truth cannot be expressed by material measurement and can only be represented by imagery. The spiritual implications of our Lord's Death and Resurrection and the communion of the spiritual world, dominated by Him, are our main belief and comfort; it matters little how it is conveyed to us, as long as we lay hold strongly on the spiritual truth and try to act and live by it.

Most of our fellow-Christians hang their faith on pegs we believe to be artificial and untrue to the Divine workmanship. Yet those pegs seem to them and are essential to their faith; and their faith is in countless cases the inspiration of most saintly and gallant, even perfect lives. We must avoid and deprecate disturbing pronouncements, out-of-place, that may injure or wreck their faith. We must hold to our search for truth and our conviction that 'the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork,' that the whole universe is one great miracle, which

we can never understand, and that its creation is no past static event but a dynamic present and continuing force in which we are all in our little spheres participant.

FRANCIS FREMANTLE.

Bedwell Park,
Hatfield, Herts.
July 26th, 1940.

SIR,

In an article of your July number the appearance of the risen Lord to the Disciples is denied to be of a corporal nature on the grounds that Paul uses the same word (*ōphthe*) in referring to it as to the appearance on the Damascus road. I should like to bring forward some points against this line of reasoning.

(1) *ōphthe* could well describe either type of appearance — in fact it would be the most natural word to use in either case.

(2) Was Paul consciously aware of a difference, and if so did he consider it worthy of mention?

The Gospel accounts of Luke and John *stress* the corporal reality of our Lord after His resurrection rather than *state* it as an item of historical interest, which strongly suggests that the question was raised only to quash some heresy and had not necessarily been considered important before, if it had been considered at all — note Matthew (or his source) makes no mention of it. If this was the case, when was the question raised, was it before Paul wrote the passage under consideration? If raised after, Paul would at that time have regarded one appearance as good as another, and therefore felt no need to differentiate between his vision and the other appearances; indeed to have done so would have been to distract his readers from the thread of his argument to irrelevant detail.

(3) Assuming Paul was aware of a difference and regarded it as important, to have admitted his vision different and even incomplete would have detracted from his claim to equality of apostleship, a thing about which he was most particular, not to say touchy.

D. MAIN.

Cuddesdon College,
Oxford.
July 3rd, 1940.

[While *ōphthe* can, of course, be used quite properly of a non-visionary appearance, it is not without significance that in the twenty cases or so in which the form *ōphthe* occurs in the New Testament, it only once refers clearly to an appearance which is not visionary — the appearance of Moses to the striving Israelites — related in the speech of St. Stephen (*Acts* vii, 26). It would seem, therefore, that in New Testament Greek it is the technical term for describing visionary appearances.—ED. *M.C.*]

THE BODY OF THE CRUCIFIED.

SIR,

In your interesting article, 'Did Jesus Die on the Cross,' you say, 'The words in Mark (xv, 22) . . . can and should be translated "they bear him or carry him unto the place Golgotha."' That they can be so translated I agree, that they should be I doubt. The word 'bring' used in the authorized versions is ambiguous, as is the Greek word (*phero*) used by St. Mark; it may be equivalent either to 'lead' or 'carry.' St. Mark sometimes uses

phero in the sense of 'carry,' *e.g.* of the paralytic (ii, 3), or of the Baptist's head (vi, 28); on the other hand, when it is said that the disciples 'bring the colt' (xi, 7) the word is surely used to mean 'lead' and not 'carry,' and the same is I think true in two other places, 'they bring unto him one that was deaf' (vii, 32) and 'they bring a blind man' (vii, 22). I note also that St. Luke once uses *phero* in a context which seems to require it to mean 'lead,' 'bring the fatted calf' (*Luke* xv, 23). The ambiguity of the word *phero* is aptly brought out by the ambiguity of the English word 'bring.'

E. R. BUCKLEY.

Polstead Rectory,
Colchester.
July 31st, 1940.

[May we add to our correspondent's references? In *Mk.* xii, 15, R.V., Jesus says, '*Bring* me a penny' where the Greek is *pherete*. Presumably the penny was not led. Also in *Mk.* i, 32, 'they *brought* unto him all that were sick.' Here *epheron* is used and suggests the transporting of the sick as in the case of the paralytic. This charitable act was postponed until the Sabbath was ended.—ED., *M.C.*]

SIR,

I recently came across in *Documents illustrating the reigns of Claudius and Nero,* compiled by M. P. Charlesworth (published by Cambridge University Press, 1939), the following inscription discovered in 1878 on a marble slab in Nazareth:—

DECREE OF CAESAR

> Respecting burial-places and tombs — whoever it may have been that made them for the worship of their fathers, children, or other relations — it is my pleasure that they remain inviolate for all time. If anyone should convict a person either of destroying them, or in any way thrusting the bereaved out of their rights, or nefariously removing the body to another place in contempt of the rights of the bereaved, or taking away the coffins or the grave stones — against such a one I order that proceedings be taken as in the case of one convicted of sacrilege. The rights of the bereaved must in future be definitely respected. In a word, let no one dare to remove corpses — otherwise, I decree that he be condemned to death on a charge of tomb-breaking.

This throws an interesting light on the story of the stealing of the body of Jesus from the tomb (*Mt.* xxvii, 13).

THOMAS WARNER.

Southorpe Lodge,
Great Driffield, Yorkshire.
August 29th, 1940.

SIR, ALFRED LOISY.

I wish to thank you for your article on Loisy in the recent issue of the *Modern Churchman.* I am a French scholar as well as a theological student and have made a special study of the modernist movement in the Roman Church, with special reference to Loisy.

As you say, it is well that he did not live to see the tragic eclipse of his country's freedom and the shadow now cast upon the values he treasured most — the highest values known to the human spirit.

It seems to me that the Roman Church, besides displaying her inveterate cruelty and blindness, made once again the great refusal when she deliberately injured and rejected one who might well have been the means of renovating her spiritual life and enlarging the boundaries of her influence.

One remembers too that Loisy, out of the sheer generosity of his nature, had offered to surrender even his lectureship at the secular *Ecole des Hautes Etudes* in a vain effort to conciliate the Papacy and to prove the innocence and sincerity of his intentions, and that even this noble gesture was haughtily disregarded.

I see Loisy as the very embodiment of the scientific temper, in his pure and calm devotion to truth, his steadfast refusal to be distracted by the clash of worldly interests or the pettiness of ecclesiastical intrigue.

Once again, thank you for your timely article which recalls us, in the storm and stress of these tumultuous days, to the example of one who was a pioneer in the cause for which we are struggling.

HAROLD KNIGHT.

SIR,

THE FUTURE OF THEOLOGY.

I have read Prof. S. A. Cook's article on *The Future of Theology*, and some of his other writings in support of a pure monotheism, with appreciation, and I entirely agree with him that 'the restatement and reassertion of a unifying monotheism, God in Nature and in Man — the inter-relation between God, Man and the Universe, in all its implications — is the most urgent of needs to-day.' Perhaps mine is what the Professor describes as one of the 'simpler and unsophisticated types of mind' which 'desire direct answers to their questions,' but which, as he acknowledges, 'stimulate critical enquiry.' Such types of mind, if mine is at all representative of them, demand that the relationship of God to the universe be 'restated,' not in terms of vague anthropomorphic origin, however hallowed such terms may be, *e.g.* the 'fatherhood' relationship, but in terms of plain, simple causation, such as theological terminology nearly approaches in the time-honoured phrase 'the Will of God.' Considering God as Cause, we may frame a 'three-fold formula' analogous to that of Prof. Cook (p. 170); (*a*) God as cause of events in the external world, *i.e.* in the 'not-self.' Such a belief leads to quietism, submission, etc., and moral ineffectiveness, since complaint takes on the character of blasphemy. (*b*) God as cause of the acts of the self. This leads to the arrogance, fanaticism, and intolerance associated with religious and moral reformers, and with some sects, *e.g.* gnostics, anabaptists. (*c*) God as cause of both the external world and also of the self's reactions to it. From this latter belief there arises the attitude most perfectly exemplified in Christ, the attitude in which are combined reverence for the world of nature, and the sense of personal union with God; reforming zeal, and tolerance; the consciousness of a divine commission in the world and of opposition as a divine opportunity.

Is it not on these latter lines that the future of theology lies? Prof. Cook's own position, if we accept his insistence on human freedom, seems to indicate that it is. Viscount Samuel, too, in his widely-read book, *Belief and Action,* supports a similar point of view. 'The principle of causation is our best hope. If the cosmos is the effect and God the cause, the nature of the cause must be seen, if only in part, in the nature of the effect.' But even so able a thinker has not avoided a serious contradiction on the ques-

tion of human freedom, for in ch. 6 (and elsewhere) he states: 'Ultimate responsibility is indivisible, since nothing is conceived with which it can be divided. If any, then all; you must attribute everything or nothing to Providence,' while in ch. 15 he says: 'The individual may not shift his responsibilities on to "Destiny," *nor yet on to God* . . . the divine element in the world, as Plato held, is not coercive but persuasive . . . Because God is reticent, man has scope.' I have read many learned reviews of this otherwise fine book (including one in the *Modern Churchman*), but none remarked upon this strange inconsistency.

E. V. MILNER.

The School House,
Brayton, nr. Selby.
July 31st, 1940.

FREEDOM OF THOUGHT IN RELIGION.

SIR,

Could you one day find room in your pages for a bibliography of works, books, pamphlets, articles on the History and Philosophy of Freedom of Thought and Expression?

The attack on freedom and reason has been increasing of late and its defenders need access to as complete an armoury as possible.

At one time the International Library Records Office in the Parc Cinquentennaire, Bruxelles, might have given assistance.

However, perhaps one of our members in London might begin such a Bibliography in your pages, and readers might then supplement his lists from their own knowledge.

I fear you may say, 'Do it yourself.' But the work requires a learned man and a student.

W. STANHOPE-LOVELL.

The Vicarage,
Aston, Oxford.
September 6th, 1940.

[The proposal is a sound one, but the list would have to be restricted to one hundred books. The late Lord Acton collected many thousands of volumes bearing on this theme.—ED. *M.C.*]

THE SIN OF THE CLOSED MIND.

SIR,

Knowing that the Council of the Modern Churchmen's Union will gladly consider suggestions made by fellow-members of the Union, I humbly venture to propose the following for consideration: That the Members of the Council kindly consider the annual publication of an Easter Book somewhat like the Lenten Books sponsored by the Bishop of London and since 1940 by the Archbishop of York.

Perhaps the title of one of the books (bearing in mind the trials of Socrates and Jesus, etc.) could be something like this: 'The Sin of the Closed Mind.'

J. A. H. BROWN.

16 Taylor's Road,
Kilpark,
Madras.